express

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Wednesday

DAYNA SMITH/TWP

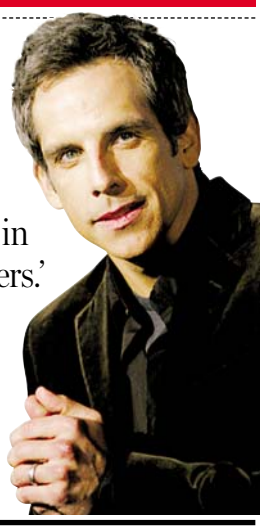
Police closed a five-block area after the heist.

Armed Heist: Police search for gunman after robbery at downtown Rite Aid store | 11

Md. Arson Case: Notoriety, race seen as possible motives | 11

Metal Gear: Christmas tree show features the best and brightest | 24

ENTERTAINMENT



Parent Trap: *Ben Stiller* is the star, but the grownups rule in 'Meet the Fockers.' Also, Dylan on DVD; 'Harry Potter' VI.

>> 17-20

Weather > Partly Sunny

53 | 45

FULL FORECAST ON PAGE 25

MOSUL ATTACK | TROOPS TARGETED

DEAN HOFFMEYER/RICHMOND TIMES-DISPATCH/AP

MASS CASUALTIES: Officials rushed to aid injured troops Tuesday after an explosion tore through a tent in Mosul, Iraq. At least 20 people were killed, including as many as 19 U.S. soldiers, and more than 60 others were wounded, officials said. ✤ **Insurgent action:** Group claims responsibility | **Page 6**

Council OKs Stadium Deal

Compromise on financing saves baseball plan from collapse

WASHINGTON | Baseball fans in the District can finally start looking forward to their first opening day in 33 years.

The D.C. Council voted 7-6 Tuesday to approve legislation that clears the way for the Montreal Expos to move to Washington next season and be renamed the Nationals. The measure allows the city to sell up to $584 million in bonds for construction of a 41,000-seat stadium about a mile south of the Capitol and renovations to RFK Stadium, where the team will play next year.

Ticket and team merchandise sales were to resume Wednesday after being suspended for a week because of uncertainty caused by changes the council made in the city's agreement with the team.

"The Nationals are finally rounding third and heading for home," said Mayor Anthony A. Williams, who negotiated the move with Major League Baseball officials.

He said he will sign the bill as soon as it gets to his desk, leaving only baseball Commissioner Bud Selig's approval of the RFK renovations for the move to become final.

The city almost struck out a week ago when the council amended the deal Williams negotiated to require that half the construction costs be privately paid, or it would be voided. Baseball officials balked at the provision and threatened to look for another home for the team if the original deal wasn't approved by Dec. 31.

The final legislation calls for the city and baseball to split the cost of insurance that would limit the city's liability on cost overruns or construction delays. It includes an amendment, introduced by Council Chairman Linda Cropp, that reduces compensatory damages for the first year if the stadium is finished late. BRETT ZONGKER (AP)

BAKING | **Wonder Bread** A bakery in Whitstable, England, is fighting plans for a phone tower because it claims radio waves will ruin its "cosmic bread," the BBC reported. Artisan Bread said emissions from the antenna will disrupt "subtle forces"

that help to make the loaves, destroying the bread's vitality. The bakery uses planetary movements to discern the best time to make bread. Bakery owner Ingrid Greenfield said the baking process "obviously" works. (EXPRESS) **EyeOpeners** | Page 2

eyeOpeners

TOYS

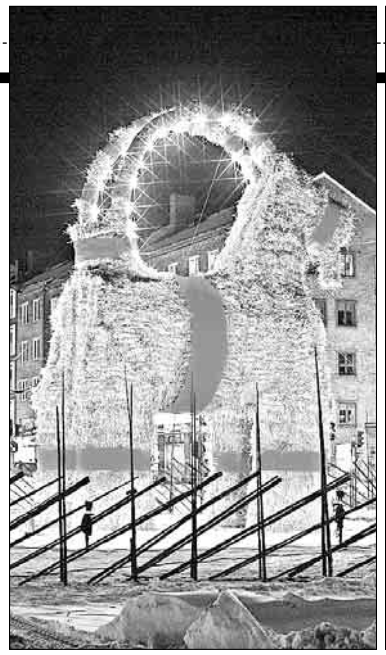
Shoot Like a Soldier, Curse Like a Sailor

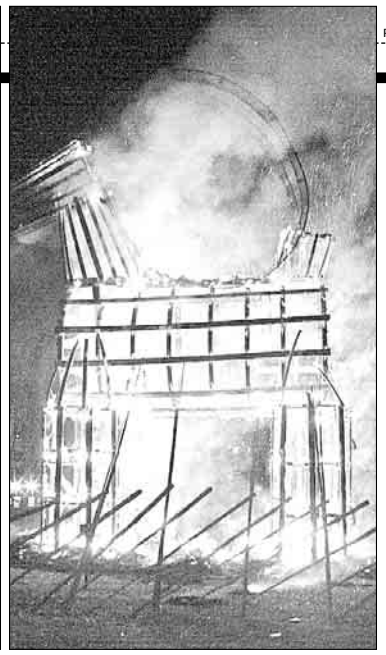
A St. Louis woman wants a toy pulled from stores because it utters profanity, KTVI-TV reported. Kim Gaiter says she bought the Burp Blaster for her 2-year-old son Rico. It's supposed to make a burping noise, but instead it utters the S-word. Gaiter said her son has been repeating the word everywhere. The toy fires foam projectiles after the gun is pumped — but utters the profanity during the pumping process. One St. Louis Kmart already took the toy off store shelves. Gaiter wants the toy removed from the market. (EXPRESS)

STORAGE

Coke and a Smile

A 17-year-old in Lincoln, R.I., thought he was giving a relative a few canisters of film to be developed. But the rolls housed more than just film — they allegedly contained cocaine as well, and the teen is now under arrest for possession, WFTV-TV reported. A family member dropped off two rolls of film to be developed at a pharmacy, said Det. Richard Champagne. But the film technician spotted white powder in one of the containers. She called the police, who identified the powder as cocaine, said Champagne. Police waited for the owner of the film to return. About an hour later, another family member who was unaware of the canister's contents came in to pick it up for the teenager, said Champagne. Police said the teen made this case a bit easier for them: The other canister contained film of the suspect himself. (EXPRESS)





PER-ERIK JADERBERG/AP

FIRE

Silent Ignite

Merchants in Gaevle, Sweden, are feeling the burn yet again. A Christmas-themed straw goat was torched by vandals Tuesday. Since 1966, the goats, erected by local businesses, have only made it through the holiday season 10 times without being burned, either accidentally or as an arsonist prank. (AP)

GAMES

Go Directly to Jail

The hot new Christmas gift in Canada this year is a board game that lets players run their own marijuana farm. Creators of "The Grow-Op Game" say the $39.95 "educational board game" highlights the perils of the marijuana business and cautions would-be growers. Negative outcomes in the game include players getting ratted on by neighbors and flooded, said Vancouver-based creator Ivan Solomon on Saturday. Solomon said the Monopoly-style game is the brainchild of a 20-something reformed pot grower known as "Rabbit." Solomon said Rabbit came up with the idea while in jail. Rabbit and Solomon brought the game to market last month. Players roll the dice, move around the board, rent properties, buy lights and equipment, and plant and harvest crops. (AP)

Health.

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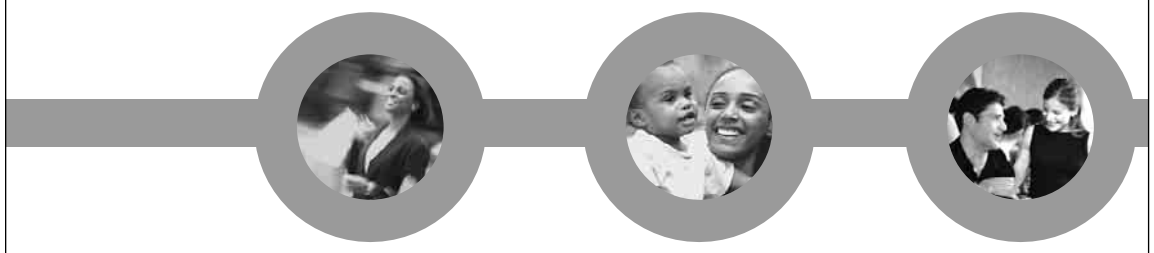

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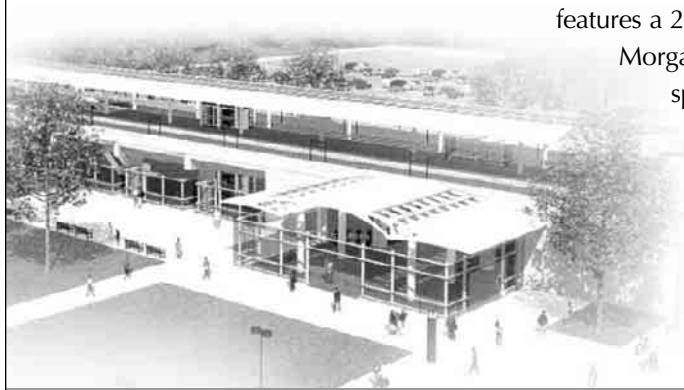

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SURFING SAVVY: As prices dropped over the past year, use of a broadband connection at home has surpassed that of dial-up in the United States, reaching 53 percent of residential Web users in October, according to Nielsen/NetRatings.

Nation

In Brief

WASHINGTON

FAA Plans to Hire 12,500 New Air Traffic Controllers

The Federal Aviation Administration announced a plan Tuesday to hire 12,500 new air traffic controllers and let some existing workers stay on the job longer than their mandatory retirement age to offset a wave of looming retirements. The plan outlined by FAA Administrator Marion Blakey also calls for speeding up training and reducing the workforce at airports with less air traffic. (AP)

NEW YORK

Judge Rejects Guilty Plea In AOL Spamming Case

A federal judge refused to accept a guilty plea Tuesday from a former America Online software engineer accused of stealing 92 million e-mail addresses and selling them to spammers. Judge Alvin Hellerstein said he was not convinced Jason Smathers, 24, had actually committed a crime under new federal "can-spam" legislation that took effect earlier this year. Another hearing is scheduled for January. (AP)

HOUSTON

Space Station to Be Visible From U.S. During Holidays

The International Space Station may be visible at various times during the holidays from the continental United States, NASA said Tuesday. On Christmas morning, the orbiting station should be visible during the predawn hours, NASA said. (AP)

Trust Holds on Drug Safety

Poll finds confidence remains in medications amid wave of new risks

WASHINGTON | Most Americans say they're confident about the safety of prescription drugs sold in the United States, according to an Associated Press poll taken at a time when several popular medications have been linked to increased risk of heart attack and stroke.

The Food and Drug Administration, the federal agency responsible for ensuring drug safety, has come under intense scrutiny recently because of health risks linked to use of Vioxx, which was withdrawn from the market; Celebrex, and now Aleve, which is sold over-the-counter.

AP

The painkiller Aleve is one of the drugs that has been under increased scrutiny.

Just over eight in 10 said they have confidence in the general safety of prescription drugs in this country, the poll conducted for the AP by Ipsos-Public Affairs found. Almost that many said they have confidence in the FDA.

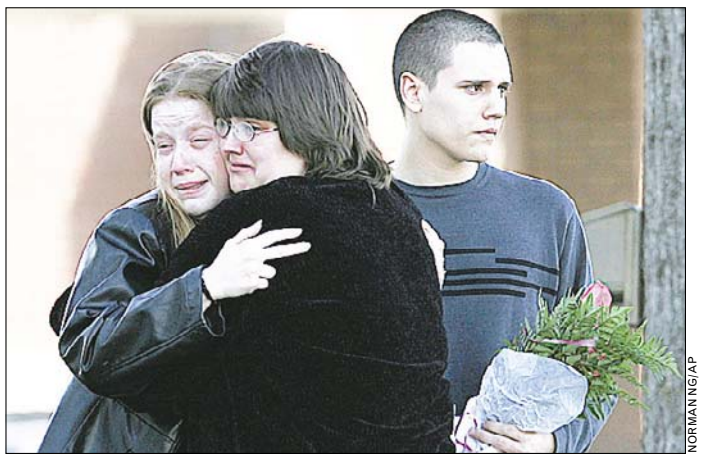
Only about a third said they were "very confident" about the safety of prescription drugs in the United States and half said they were "somewhat confident."

The poll was taken after questions were raised last week about Celebrex and more than two months after Vioxx was withdrawn from the market. But the poll was taken before a study raised a possible heart attack-stroke link with naproxen, which is sold by Bayer AG over the counter as Aleve. WILL LESTER (AP)

DRUG IMPORTATION

➜ **The Bush administration** said Tuesday that permitting Americans to buy prescription drugs abroad safely, if it can be done at all, would wipe away most consumer savings and diminish investment in new medicines. Americans would be better off increasing their use of generic medicines, which often are cheaper in the United States than elsewhere, said a report from an administration task force studying the feasibility of legalized drug imports. "It would be extraordinarily difficult and costly for 'personal' importation to be implemented in a way that ensures the safety and effectiveness of the imported drugs," the report said. (AP)

MISSOURI | SLAIN MOTHER'S MEMORIAL



NORMAN NG/AP

TEARFUL PAUSE: Mourners grieve following funeral services for Bobbie Jo Stinnett on Tuesday in Maryville, Mo. Hundreds gathered to remember Stinnett, 23, who was strangled and whose baby girl was cut from her womb.

Army Documents Detail More Abuse Allegations

WASHINGTON | Internal Army documents describe alleged mistreatment of Iraqi citizens by U.S. soldiers, including reports of prisoners who died under suspicious circumstances and soldiers stealing cash and other valuables from Iraqis during searches of their homes.

The hundreds of pages of Army records, obtained by the American Civil Liberties Union, described one investigation into whether an Army staff sergeant deliberately gave a captured Iraqi an old handgun to justify shooting him.

The latest disclosures about alleged mistreatment of Iraqi prisoners followed reports earlier this week that military interrogators at the U.S. prison at Guantanamo Bay, some posing as FBI agents, humiliated and abused detainees, including inserting lit cigarettes in their ears.

Army spokesman Col. Joseph Curtin said the documents released by the ACLU are "indicative that the Army takes seriously any allegation of detainee abuse. Any allegation will be investigated." TED BRIDIS (AP)

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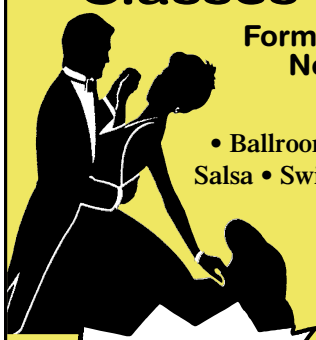

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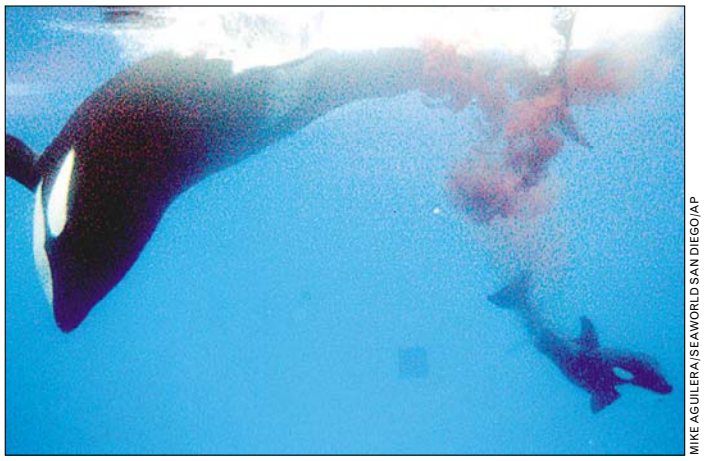
Nation

HOLIDAY LIGHTS: Richard and Donna Hamann wanted to give something back to their 650-person town of Anthon, Iowa — so they paid $25,000 to cover the town's electricity bills, which were all due Dec. 25.

SEA LIFE | LABOR PAINS



MIKE AGUILERA/SEAWORLD SAN DIEGO/AP

FIRST SWIM: A baby killer whale is born to mother Kasatka, a 28-year-old whale, on Tuesday at SeaWorld San Diego. The calf instinctively swam to the surface to draw its first breath and measures between 6 and 7 feet long.

Study: Teen Drug Use, Smoking on the Decline

WASHINGTON | Youth smoking and drug abuse declined again this year, according to a federal study that also found marked progress over the last decade in persuading teens to avoid cigarettes and illicit substances.

The smoking rate among younger teens is half what it was in the mid-1990s, and drug use by that group is down by one-third, says the University of Michigan study, done for the National Institute on Drug Abuse and released Tuesday.

Bush administration officials cited the study as a sign of progress in reducing teen drug abuse.

Altogether, gains in 2004 over 2003 were modest. Researchers were bothered by increases in the use of inhalants — especially among 8th graders — such as glue, aerosols and the pain-control narcotic OxyContin.

Researchers said they are concerned that use of inhalants, which are easily accessible to children, may rebound unless children are warned about the grave dangers the substances pose. SIOBHAN MCDONOUGH (AP)

World's Smallest Baby a 'Blessing'

CHICAGO | A premature infant believed to be the smallest baby ever to survive was called "a great blessing" Tuesday by her mother, who is preparing to take the little girl and her twin sister home from the hospital.

The baby, named Rumaisa, weighed 8.6 ounces when she was delivered Sept. 19 at Loyola University Medical Center — less than a can of soda. That is 1.3 ounces smaller than the previous record holder, who was born at the same the hospital in 1989, according to hospital spokeswoman Sandra Martinez.

AP

Rumaisa Rahman is seen next to a hand a few weeks after she was born.

The twins' mother, Mahajabeen Shaik, said Tuesday she didn't "have the words to say how thankful I was" when she first got to hold her children, in their second month. (AP)

Population Growing in U.S. West

Census estimates show Americans choosing states with open spaces

WASHINGTON | New Mexico, Idaho, Utah and other states blessed with wide-open spaces are seeing steady population growth as increasingly cramped Americans look for ways to spread out.

The Census Bureau's annual population estimates showed the United States added another 3 million people in the last year for an overall population of just under 294 million. The top 10 list of fastest-growing states was dominated by those in the West and South, with Nevada leading the way for the 18th consecutive year.

While favorable weather and jobs continue to be primary lures, people also are looking for places that offered space, affordability and the great outdoors. That helped place Idaho fourth on the list of fastest-growing states. Utah was seventh and New Mexico 10th.

Massachusetts was the only state that had a slight decline — down 3,800 people or 0.1 percent. (AP)

Today in The Washington Post

Cash Cow: Somewhere in China, factory workers can't make enough toy automatic teller machines that dispense real cash for clamoring American children. | *Style*

Scene Stealers: Nativity Scenes fall victim to looters every season but this year the number of displays vandalized or stolen appears to be higher than usual. | *A Section*

Golden Years: A Washington Post-ABC News poll finds President Bush has support for a Social Security overhaul but skepticism about his plan remains. | *Page A1*

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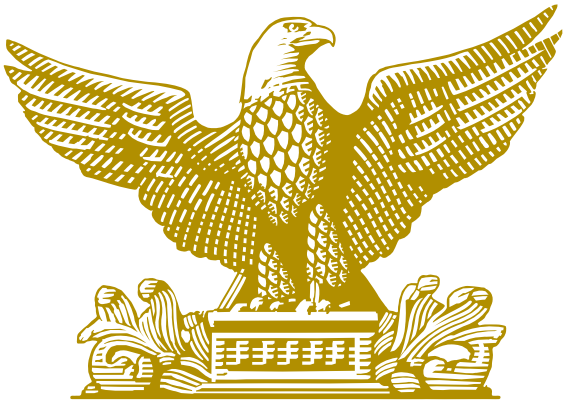

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World

$2.4B **The total winnings** to be spread throughout Spain on Wednesday by El Gordo, or the Fat One, the world's richest lottery. An estimated three-quarters of Spain's 40 million people take part in the Christmas tradition.

20 Die in Attack on U.S. Base

U.S. casualty total unclear; Sunni group claims strike in Mosul

BAGHDAD | An explosion tore through a soft-sided mess tent where U.S. soldiers were eating lunch Tuesday at a military base near the northern city of Mosul, blowing a hole in the ceiling and leaving the floor littered with trays of food and puddles of blood. Officials said at least 20 people were killed in one of the most devastating attacks against Americans in Iraq since the start of the war.

A spokesman for U.S. military headquarters in Baghdad said 19 of the dead were American soldiers, which would make it the deadliest single strike against U.S. troops in this country. However, a military spokesman in Mosul said 14 U.S. troops died in the blast, which came just four days before Christmas.

Inside the tent, U.S. soldiers reacted quickly. With people screaming and thick smoke billowing, soldiers turned their lunch tables upside down, placed the wounded on them and gently carried them into the parking lot, said Jeremy Redmon, a reporter for the Richmond (Va.) Times-Dispatch embedded with the troops in Mosul.

A radical Sunni Muslim group, the Ansar al-Sunnah Army, claimed responsibility for the attack, which officials said wounded about 60 people — the latest in a week of deadly strikes across Iraq that highlighted the unwavering power of the insurgents in the run-up to the Jan. 30 national elections.

A U.S. military official said authorities believe the damage was caused by at least one large-caliber artillery round or rocket. Another official said it was possible the explosive had been planted. (AP)

DEAN HOFFMEYER/RICHMOND TIMES-DISPATCH

A U.S. soldier is comforted by a member of his unit as he stands over a stretcher with the body of a comrade who died in the attack on a U.S. base in Mosul Tuesday.

STEFAN ROUSSEAU/AP

Blair greets British troops in Basra.

BLAIR LANDS IN BAGHDAD

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER Tony Blair made a surprise visit to Baghdad Tuesday for meetings with Interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi and election officials, where he spoke of a "battle between democracy and terror."

It was the prime minister's first visit to Baghdad and his third to Iraq since Saddam Hussein was toppled in April 2003. (AP)

Kidnappers Free French Reporters

Two men were held by Islamic Army in Iraq for over four months

PARIS | Joy swept through France with the release Tuesday in Iraq of two French reporters held hostage for four months. The government said Christian Chesnot and Georges Malbrunot should be home for Christmas.

The upper house of parliament erupted with applause when Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin told the senators the militant Islamic Army in Iraq had freed the men.

Chesnot, 38, who works for Radio France Internationale, and Malbrunot, 41, a correspondent for the daily Le Figaro, were handed over to French authorities in Baghdad and were expected back in France on Wednesday, the French Foreign Ministry said.

The men were kidnapped Aug. 20 along with their Syrian driver on the road from Baghdad to Najaf. The driver, Mohammed al-Joundi, was freed in November.

Arab television station Al-Jazeera reported that it received a statement from the Islamic Army saying the reporters were freed after it was proven they were not U.S. spies. JAMEY KEATEN (AP)

$39M Bank Heist Stuns N. Ireland

No suspects identified, but sophisticated raid may lead to IRA

BELFAST, NORTHERN IRELAND | In one of the world's biggest robberies, thieves took the families of two bankers hostage and forced them to help steal more than $39 million from the vaults of a Belfast bank, authorities said Tuesday.

Experts said Monday's raid on the Northern Bank was the biggest robbery since 1987, when thieves made off with $65 million in cash and other valuables from the Knightsbridge Safe Deposit Center in west London.

The tactics in Belfast — particularly the use of hostage-taking as a way to infiltrate a high-security target — suggested a level of sophistication most commonly found within Northern Ireland's rival outlawed groups, particularly the Irish Republican Army.

Assistant Chief Constable Sam Kinkaid said his detectives didn't yet know whether a particular group was responsible for what he called a "clearly well organized" raid.

Irish Justice Minister Michael McDowell said peacemaking efforts could be hurt if police linked the raid to the IRA. The group has observed a truce since 1997 but remains active. Efforts to revive a power-sharing government in Northern Ireland involving Sinn Fein, the IRA-linked party, have repeatedly stumbled over demands that the IRA disarm.

Both families "suffered great trauma" during their abduction but were released unharmed, except for one person who needed treatment for hypothermia, Kinkaid said. (AP)

eBay Exec in India Released on Bail

NEW DELHI | The Delhi High Court on Tuesday granted bail to the head of eBay's Indian subsidiary, an American citizen who was jailed in connection with the online auction of a sex video involving teenagers.

Avnish Bajaj, the CEO of Baazee.com, was arrested Friday following the sale of images showing classmates at a New Delhi high school engaged in oral sex. His arrest drew the interest of the U.S. State Department and a strong rebuke from industry officials.

Police say they arrested Bajaj because he violated a law outlawing "publishing, transmitting, or causing to publish any information in electronic form, which is obscene."

eBay said it was "outraged" by the arrest. The sale took place without the company's knowledge, it said. (AP)

BY THE NUMBERS: A joint U.S., British and Jamaican operation against the Caribbean drug trade has seized 12 tons of cocaine since October, British Foreign Office minister Bill Rammell said Tuesday. Rammell said Operation Kingfish had contributed to an 80% decline in the amount of cocaine flowing through Jamaica, a major staging post for cocaine produced in Colombia. (AP)

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World

ON TAP: To the joy of German soccer fans, Anheuser-Busch agreed Tuesday to let German brewery Bitburger also serve suds at stadiums for the 2006 World Cup. Anheuser-Busch has exclusive rights to sell beer in and around the games.

Signals Mixed in Ukraine

Pro-Western candidate gets Putin's OK, but tensions still run high

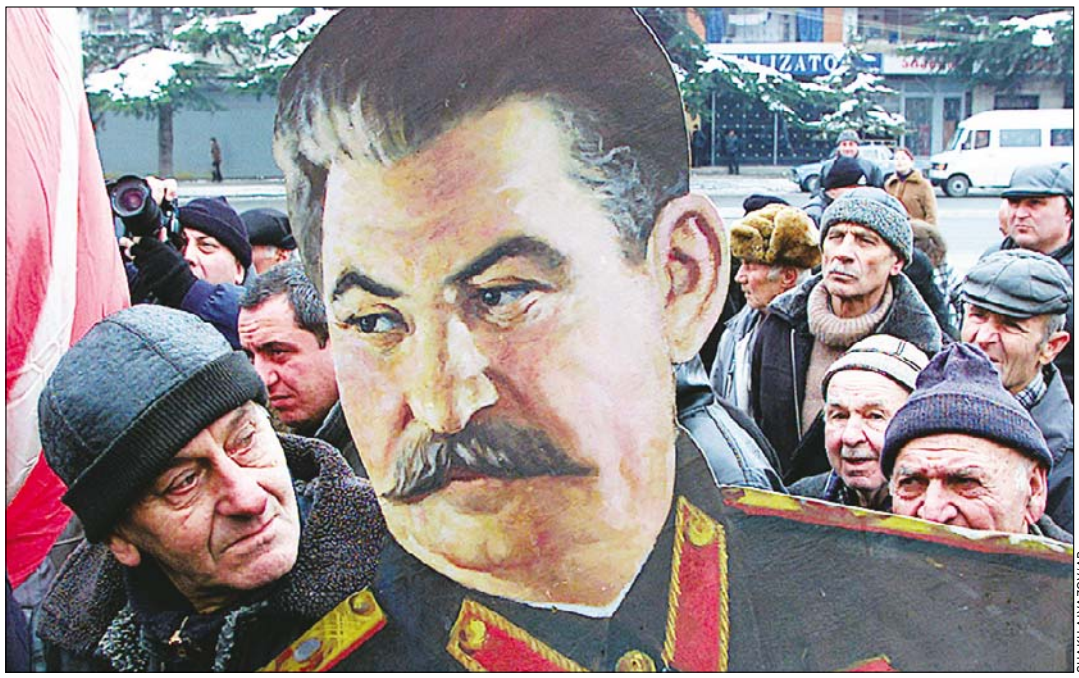
DONETSK, UKRAINE | Supporters of presidential candidate Viktor Yushchenko traveling in a 50-car convoy ran into a roadblock of his rival's backers Tuesday and failed to carry their campaign into this industrial city.

With five days until Sunday's court-ordered rerun of Yushchenko's runoff election against Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovych, the faceoff underscored the division in this former Soviet republic of 48 million people between the expanding European Union and a reinvigorated Russia.

In a conciliatory gesture, Russian President Vladimir Putin, who has strongly backed Ukraine's prime minister, said Tuesday that he could work with an administration headed by Yushchenko, himself a former prime minister.

"We have worked with him already and the cooperation was not bad," Putin said during a visit to Germany. He irritated Western nations by quickly congratulating Yanukovych after he was declared winner of last month's disputed runoff election. (AP)

GEORGIA | STRONGMAN



SHAKH AIVAZOV/AP

IDOLS: A man looks at a cutout of Soviet dictator Josef Stalin during a rally to mark the 125th anniversary of Stalin's birth in his hometown of Gori, 50 miles west of Tbilisi, on Tuesday. Considered a brutal tyrant for political purges in which more than 10 million are believed to have died, Stalin continues to be admired in the former Soviet Union — even by non-Communists — for leading the country to victory in World War II and taking it into the industrial age. He died in 1953.

Putin Insists Yukos Unit's Sale Legal

Analysts suspect state is behind bid for oil giant

MOSCOW | President Vladimir Putin affirmed the legality of the $9.3 billion sale of the crown jewel of the Yukos oil empire to a mysterious company, suggesting Tuesday that the subsidiary's new owners could eventually link up with another Russian energy company.

Putin's comments, his first since little-known bidder BaikalFinansGroup snapped up Yukos' Yuganskneftegaz in an auction Sunday, appeared to confirm market expectations that the heart of Yukos would ultimately wind up in the hands of state-controlled natural gas giant Gazprom. Acquiring the unit would make Gazprom a global oil-and-gas energy titan.

Putin, at a news conference in Germany with Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, also said the bidders had a long history in the energy sector.

The sale of Yuganskneftegaz, against its parent company's $28 billion back tax bills, was the culmination of an 18-month legal drive against the company and its jailed former CEO. The Kremlin has cast the case as a probe into shady business practices. Observers say it is a bid to transfer Yukos assets into Kremlin-friendly hands and punish Mikhail Khodorkovsky's perceived political aspirations. (AP)

In Brief

CONGO

U.N. Peacekeepers to Set Up Buffer Zone in Eastern Congo

The United Nations said Tuesday it will send peacekeepers to separate warring Congo army factions, warning that the troops will repulse any attempt to cross the new buffer zone. A human rights group claimed that 180,000 civilians have now fled their homes in Congo's east, where renegade soldiers have been fighting government loyalist troops. (AP)

KASHMIR

Indian P.M.'s Tough Line On Disputed Kashmir Border

India reasserted its claim over Kashmir on Tuesday, saying it would not redraw its boundary with Pakistan in the Himalayan territory that is at the heart of their 57-year-old dispute. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's tough statement in parliament came less than three weeks before a scheduled meeting with Pakistan's President Gen. Pervez Musharraf in Bangladesh. India and Pakistan have fought two wars over control of Kashmir, which both claim in its entirety. (AP)

HONDURAS

President Under Threat

Drug traffickers and other criminals are trying to kill President Ricardo Maduro, Security Minister Oscar Alvarez said Tuesday. The minister's comments come a day after Maduro himself said he was increasing security because of such threats. Maduro began his five-year term in 2001 after promising a crackdown on gangs. His own son was kidnapped and killed in 1997. (AP)

AFGHANISTAN

Top Leaders Will Be Asked To Give Up Dual Citizenship

President Hamid Karzai will demand that all members of his new Cabinet renounce their citizenship in any other country, his spokesman said Tuesday. Many of Afghanistan's political elite have acquired U.S. or British nationality while living abroad during decades of near-constant warfare. Some have been reluctant to give up their status, earning criticism that they lack faith in Afghanistan's future. (AP)

Pope Falters in Vatican Address

VATICAN CITY | Pope John Paul II made a rare allusion to his personal struggle with aging and illness, saying in a Christmas address Tuesday that each passing year brings a greater need for help from God.

The 84-year-old pontiff, slowed by Parkinson's disease, addressed cardinals from his wheeled throne in a Vatican hall. He struggled to catch his breath at several points.

"The passing years make one feel an ever more intense need for help from God, and from people," he said before handing his speech over to an aide. ANGELA DOLAND (AP)

ALESSANDRO BIANCHI/REUTERS

A cardinal lines up to greet Pope John Paul II at the Vatican on Tuesday.

Iceland Stands by Offer to Fischer Despite U.S. Plea

REYKJAVIK, ICELAND | Iceland has rejected a U.S. request to drop the offer of a residency permit for former American chess champion Bobby Fischer, officials said Tuesday.

U.S. Ambassador James Gadsden had asked the country last week to withdraw its offer because Fischer is wanted in the United States on criminal charges for violating international sanctions against Yugoslavia and playing chess there in 1992.

Fischer, 61, is being held in detention in Japan, where he was caught trying to board a flight for the Philippines with an invalid passport in July after the United States had revoked his passport. It remained unclear if Fischer would be released by Japan.

Gadsden was told that Iceland wanted to recognize its historic connection with Fischer, who has been held in great esteem here since winning the chess World Championship in Reykjavik in 1972. (AP)

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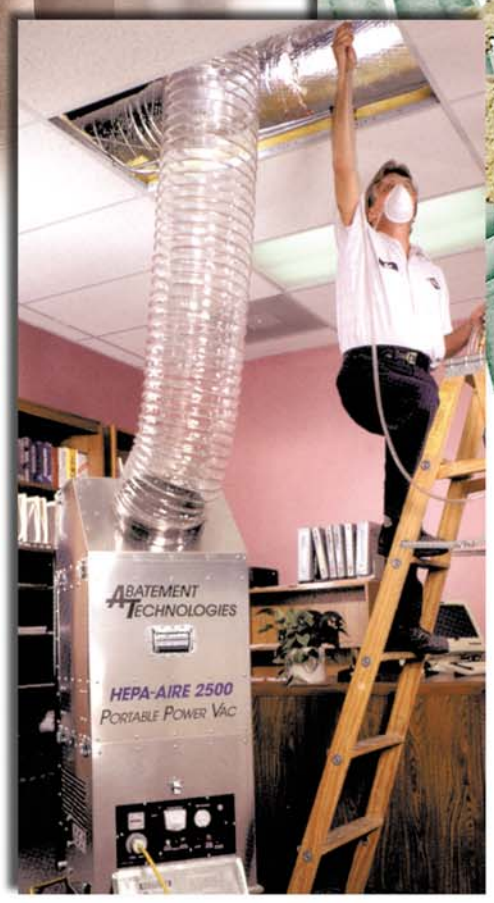

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Money

Earnings Fuel Spike in Dow

Industrial average hits 3.5-year high amid strong company news

NEW YORK | The stock market barreled higher Tuesday, sending the Dow Jones industrials to a new 3½ year high as two Wall Street firms reported better-than-expected earnings and a brokerage gave tech bellwether Intel Corp. a ratings upgrade.

The good earnings news, along with the Intel upgrade, set a positive tone for the market throughout the session. Stocks also benefited from the traditional "Santa Claus" rally, as mutual funds and money managers shuffle their portfolios before the year ends.

"The company news that we've seen over the past few days has been, on balance, positive, and that's giving investors the courage to buy," said Hugh Johnson, chief investment officer for First Albany Corp.

Stocks have climbed steadily since the presidential election, with good economic data and positive profit forecasts for 2005 assuring investors of further returns.

The Dow rose 97.83, or 0.92 percent, to 10,759.43. It was the best close for the Dow since June 13, 2001, surpassing the previous 2004 high of 10,737.70 set on Feb. 11.

Barry Berman, head trader for Robert W. Baird & Co. in Milwaukee, said the market was being driven by an overall positive outlook for the economy, lower oil prices, historically low interest rates as well as seasonal buying that tends to lift shares in the last weeks of the year.

"There's a lot of positives going on right now," Berman said. "Even on the days where there has been bad news, the market has rebounded really well." MICHAEL J. MARTINEZ (AP)

Raines Out at Fannie Mae

WASHINGTON | The chief executive and top financial officer at mortgage giant Fannie Mae have been forced out, congressional and industry sources said Tuesday, as the nation's second largest financial institution struggles to deal with revelations of auditing improprieties.

Chief executive Franklin Raines and chief financial officer Timothy Howard were forced to resign, according to congressional and industry sources who spoke on condition of anonymity, as officials intensified investigations into revelations that the company will probably be forced to restate $9 billion or more in earnings over the past four years.

Raines

A review by the Securities and Exchange Commission determined last week that Fannie Mae must restate earnings back to 2001 because it violated accounting rules for derivatives — financial instruments used to hedge against interest-rate swings — and for some prepaid loans. (AP)

Post Buys Web Magazine Slate

WASHINGTON | Microsoft Corp. sold its popular Slate online magazine Tuesday to The Washington Post Co., a move that makes Slate's political commentary and quirky feature articles more broadly available across the Internet.

Microsoft has said Slate, with roughly 6 million readers monthly, breaks even financially but isn't consistently profitable.

The Post, which also owns Express, has said it plans no editorial changes at Slate. (AP)

Market Action

New York Stock Exchange

Gainers

STOCK	LAST	DAILY CHANGE	DAILY PERCENT CHANGE
Aleris Intl	16.65	+2.22	+15.4
CablvsnNY	25.06	+2.95	+13.3
CmclMtl	51.57	+4.15	+8.8
SfgdSci	2.26	+.18	+8.7
Gerdau gn	6.57	+.50	+8.2

Losers

YorkIn	33.46	-4.90	-12.8
StarGsSr	5.10	-.58	-10.2
Salton	4.80	-.50	-9.4
Gtech s	26.07	-2.29	-8.1
Invacare	47.41	-4.03	-7.8

NASDAQ Stock Market

Gainers

STOCK	LAST	DAILY CHANGE	DAILY PERCENT CHANGE
IbisTech	4.03	+1.37	+51.5
INTAC	15.71	+4.03	+34.5
VCamps	2.07	+.50	+31.8
ChrVisn	2.22	+.38	+20.7
AngioDyn n	18.36	+3.06	+20.0

Losers

Rambus	21.50	-3.85	-15.2
SST	5.99	-1.02	-14.6
Margo	4.30	-.70	-14.0
HollisEden	9.35	-1.43	-13.3
Isonics	5.15	-.73	-12.4

Rates

	CURRENT	PREVIOUS WEEK
Prime Rate	5.25	5.00
Fed Funds close	2.25	2.25
3-month	2.18	2.18
2-year	3.03	2.96
10-year	4.17	4.12
30-year	4.80	4.77

Currency (Dollars in foreign currency)

	TODAY	PREVIOUS DAY	YEAR AGO
British Pound	.5187	.5137	.5659
Canadian Dollar	1.2304	1.2289	1.3379
European Euro	.7478	.7463	.8074
Japanese Yen	104.38	104.04	107.78
Mexican Peso	11.1815	11.1540	11.2290
Taiwanese Dollar	32.33	32.41	34.05

DOW	NASDAQ	S&P 500
+97.83	+23.06	+10.80
+0.92	+1.08	+0.90
10759.43	2150.91	1205.45

Media Stocks

STOCK	LAST	DAILY CHANGE	YEAR TO DATE PERCENT CHANG
ClearChan	33.81	+.44	-27.8
Comcast	31.38	+.25	-4.3
Comc sp	30.92	+.28	-1.2
DirecTV	16.46	...	-.5
Disney	27.48	+.06	+17.8
Fox Ent	31.54	+.29	+8.2
Gannett	80.00	+1.01	-10.3
GTelevsa	59.13	+.03	+48.3
LibtyMA	10.88	+.20	+10.6
McGrH	90.51	+.42	+29.4
NewsCpA n	18.59	+.13	+8.1
NewsCpB n	19.03	+.09	+7.3
Thomson	33.98	+.56	-6.3
TimeWarn	19.38	-.02	+7.7
ViacomB	35.96	+.41	-19.0

FREQUENT FLIER: D.C. Mayor Anthony Williams is squeezing in one more trip this year, to Los Angeles for Christmas. He has defended his travels, which this year included trips to China, Thailand, Las Vegas, Rome, Atlantic City and Paris.

Local

Police Feared Hostages In Downtown Barricade

WASHINGTON | Police closed several downtown blocks Tuesday, believing a gunman might have taken hostages inside a drug store. Instead, they discovered several hours later that the armed robber had fled out a back door while two workers hid in a back room.

The trouble began about one hour after the store opened, when police said an armed man in an orange jumpsuit and black ski mask took the store manager into her office and forced her to open the safe.

"We don't know if he was in the building when we got the first employee out," said Metro Police Department Officer Tommy Barnes. He said the suspect escaped with an undetermined amount of cash. Authorities cordoned off a five-block area around the Rite Aid store, located four blocks north of the White House, before determining the gunman went out the back. That kept many area workers from getting to their jobs. (AP)

Metro Ready to Act on Train Crash

WASHINGTON | Metro officials said Tuesday the transit agency may take action in the coming days based on its investigation into last month's crash of two subway trains on the Red Line.

Twenty people were hurt Nov. 3 when a train with just a driver aboard rolled backward and hit a passenger train at the Woodley Park station in Northwest Washington.

Metro sent memos to its drivers after the crash, outlining safety procedures. The National Transportation Safety Board, which is investigating the crash, later told Metro to instruct drivers to use the service or emergency brakes during a rollback. (AP)

Race Blamed in Md. Arson

Prosecution says group may have also sought notoriety for blazes

GREENBELT, MD. | An arson that destroyed part of a development with many black homeowners was "an effort to wipe out a community" and authorities are "very carefully investigating" whether the fires were a racial hate crime, a federal prosecutor said Tuesday.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Donna Sanger said the suspects, "not all of whom are in custody at this time," intended to "inflict as much damage as possible." Six men have been arrested, and authorities have said they have interviewed or plan to question about 10 more people.

The Dec. 6 fires destroyed 10 houses and damaged 16 others at the upscale Hunters Brooke development in the suburbs of Washington, much of which was still under construction. Investigators called it the largest residential arson in Maryland history.

Sanger made her comments during a detention hearing for the first suspect arrested, Aaron L. Speed, 21, of Waldorf. A magistrate granted Sanger's request to keep Speed in custody until his trial.

Speed's attorney, public defender John C. Chamble, called the government's case "extremely thin."

Two other motives have been suggested in court documents — a desire to gain notoriety for a local gang and revenge. The documents show that Michael E. Gilbert, 21, said the group responsible goes by 'The Family' and the "Unseen Cavaliers." BRIAN WITTE (AP)

GAIL BURTON/AP

Family members of Aaron Speed, accompanied by Speed's attorney John Chamble, right, and another unidentified attorney, left, leave court on Tuesday.

The Lotteries

Tuesday, Dec. 21

DISTRICT	
Mid-day Lucky Numbers	5-2-5
Evening Lucky Numbers	0-7-2
Mid-day DC 4	4-5-3-2
Evening DC 4	7-1-8-5
Quick Cash	32-10-38-11-5-8
Hot Five	1-24-5-32-18

MARYLAND	
Mid-day Pick 3	3-7-9
Evening Pick 3	1-3-6
Mid-day Pick 4	0-9-1-6
Evening Pick 4	2-2-8-1
Match 5	3-26-27-30-35 Bonus: 1

VIRGINIA	
Mid-day Pick 3 (Tues.)	6-0-4
Evening Pick 3 (Mon.)	8-2-9
Mid-day Pick 4 (Tues.)	9-1-8-5
Evening Pick 4 (Mon.)	1-1-4-8
Mid-day Cash 5 (Tues.)	2-10-14-27-32
Evening Cash 5 (Mon.)	6-11-19-20-32

All winning numbers are official only when validated at a lottery ticket location or a lottery claims office. Drawings that occur after Express's deadline will be published two days later.

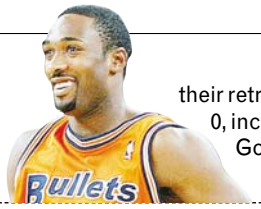
Deadly SE Fire Blamed on Heater

WASHINGTON | A space heater that set bedding ablaze was blamed Tuesday for sparking the fire which killed four family members, including two children. The ruling from investigators came hours after a fire in another city home — which seriously injured two children — was also attributed to problems involving a space heater.

The deadly blaze gutted a rowhouse in Southeast Washington Monday. Sisters Daisha Reid, 5, and Aisha McAllister, 11, died in the flames along with their mother, Joy Hellams, 30. Hellams' grandfather, David Ferguson, 70, died after jumping from a window on the second floor.

Barely 24 hours later, two girls were critically hurt when another rowhouse, in Northwest Washington, caught fire. That fire was blamed on an overloaded extension cord connected to a space heater. (AP)

Sports



DRESSED FOR SUCCESS: Orange must agree with the Washington Wizards. When the team has worn their retro Bullets uniforms the team is 2-0, including Monday night's victory over Golden State.

Johnson Trade Falls Apart

Dodgers pull out of proposed blockbuster swap

BASEBALL | The Los Angeles Dodgers withdrew Tuesday from the proposed three-team, 10-player trade that would have sent Randy Johnson from the Arizona Diamondbacks to the New York Yankees.

"As we sit here right now, the deal is no more," Dodgers general manager Paul DePodesta said during a conference call. "I've been saying all along that we weren't going to do the deal unless it made sense for this club in 2005, and that was not the case."

Earlier in the day, an official of one of the teams and a person close to one of the players involved in the trade said the deal had been submitted early Tuesday to baseball commissioner Bud Selig for approval. The two spoke on condition of anonymity.

But Pat Courtney, a spokesman in the commissioner's office, said in the afternoon that more documentation had to be submitted before Selig could consider the complex transaction.

Los Angeles would have received right-hander Javier Vazquez from the Yankees along with two top prospects, catcher Dioner Navarro and third baseman Eric Duncan. The Dodgers also would have gotten pitcher Mike Koplove from Arizona.

Arizona would have gotten outfielder Shawn Green and pitchers Brad Penny, Yhency Brazoban and Brandon Weeden from the Dodgers. Along with Johnson, the Yankees would have gotten pitcher Kaz Ishii from Los Angeles. RONALD BLUM (AP)

ALAN DIAZ/AP

Patriots quarterback Tom Brady threw a late interception in Monday night's game that set the stage for the Miami Dolphins to complete their surprising victory.

Darius' Big Hit Yields Major Fine

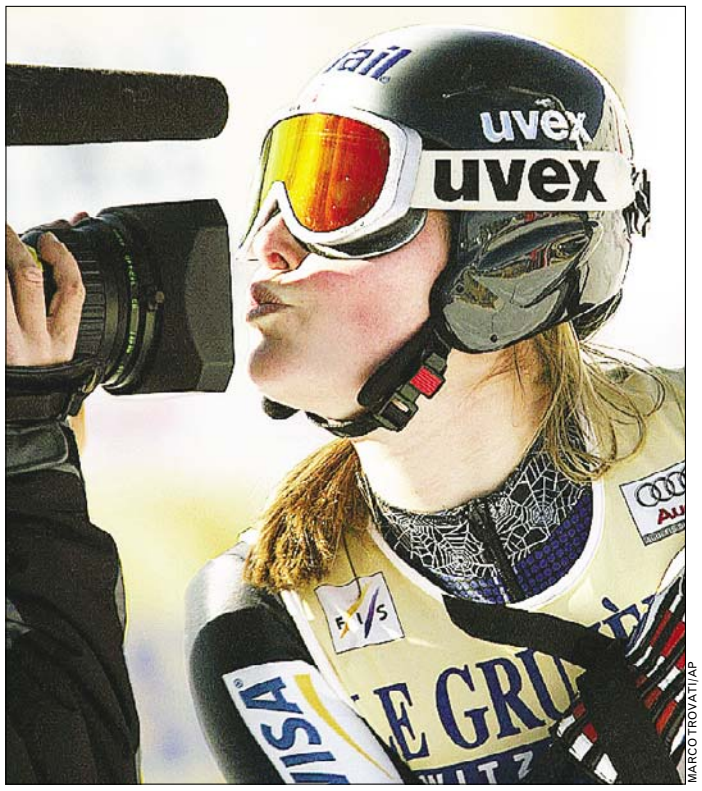
FOOTBALL | Jacksonville Jaguars safety Donovin Darius was fined $75,000 by the NFL on Tuesday for a hit across the neck of the Green Bay Packers' Robert Ferguson that left the wide receiver temporarily paralyzed.

Darius, who was ejected from the game, wasn't suspended because league disciplinarian Gene Washington noted that this was the first time he had been fined for a violation.

Ferguson caught a pass over the middle, and Darius hit him across the helmet and neck. Ferguson lay on the ground and was taken off the field, regaining feeling in his legs after he was hospitalized. He was released from the hospital on Tuesday.

Darius said that he spoke with Ferguson in the hospital. "We had a good conversation in which he told me he has no hard feelings," Darius said. "We agreed that it was a part of the game. The most important thing is that Robert is OK." (AP)

SKIING | SHE LOVES THE CAMERA



MARCO TROVATI/AP

G-FORCE: American Lindsey C. Kildow kisses a camera as she celebrates her second place finish in the women's World Cup super-G on Tuesday.

Patriots Say They Need To Get Smarter Quickly

FOOTBALL | The New England Patriots believed they needed to get better despite rolling to a 12-1 record.

Now they need to get smarter.

Two ill-advised plays by quarterback Tom Brady and safety Rodney Harrison led to a stunning 29-28 loss to the struggling Miami Dolphins, who trailed by 11 points with three minutes left Monday night.

"We didn't get outmatched physically," defensive end Richard Seymour said Tuesday on WEEI-AM. "I just think, mentally, we didn't do a good enough job of being in the right places at the right time."

Trailing 28-17 on Monday night, Miami's A.J. Feeley threw to the back of the end zone where Harrison ran into Chris Chambers. The pass interference penalty put the ball at the 1, and Sammy Morris scored on the next play.

The Patriots got the ball back but didn't keep it very long. Brady flipped a short pass under pressure from Jason Taylor that was picked off by Brendon Ayanbadejo.

Had Brady taken the sack, the Patriots could have punted and forced the Dolphins to drive more than half the field. Instead, on fourth-and-10 at the 21, Feeley hit Derrius Thompson for the go-ahead touchdown. "If those come up again, you just try to make a better decision," Brady said. (AP)

TODAY'S TV LINEUP

COLLEGE FOOTBALL (8 P.M. ON ESPN) Bowling Green and Memphis should continue the GMAC Bowl's tradition of high-scoring games.

COLLEGE HOOPS (8 P.M. ON ESPN) No. 1 Illinois (10-0) takes on Missouri (6-4).

COLLEGE HOOPS (7 P.M. ON COMCAST) Old Dominion goes for its 11th win of the year when taking on Saint Joseph's, a member of last year's Elite 8.

COLLEGE HOOPS (9 P.M. ON COMCAST) No. 5 Wake Forest faces New Mexico in a nonconference game.

NBA (10 P.M. ON ESPN2) Memphis and Golden State, two of the bottom-dwellers of the Western Conference, square off.

AP Tells BCS to Stop Using Its Poll

COLLEGE FOOTBALL | The Associated Press has told the Bowl Championship Series to stop using its college football poll to determine which teams play for the national title and in the most prestigious bowl games.

The BCS has used the AP poll of 65 writers and broadcasters as a component in its rankings since the system was implemented by officials from the Big East, Big 12, Big Ten, Atlantic Coast Conference, Pac-10, Southeastern Conference and Notre Dame in 1998.

The AP said such use was never sanctioned and had reached the point where it threatened to undermine the independence and integrity of the poll.

The AP sent BCS coordinator Kevin Weiberg a cease-and-desist letter, dated Dec. 21, stating that use of the poll is unlawful and harms the AP's reputation. RALPH D. RUSSO (AP)

"If you've got a Corvette that runs into a brick wall, you know what's gonna happen." — **Shaquille O'Neal,** in an ABC interview, warning Kobe Bryant not to drive into the lane when the Heat play the Lakers on Christmas.

Years After MJ, Bulls Win a Few

Chicago's four-game streak is team's longest since Jordan left town

NBA | Well, well, well, look who has a little winning streak going.

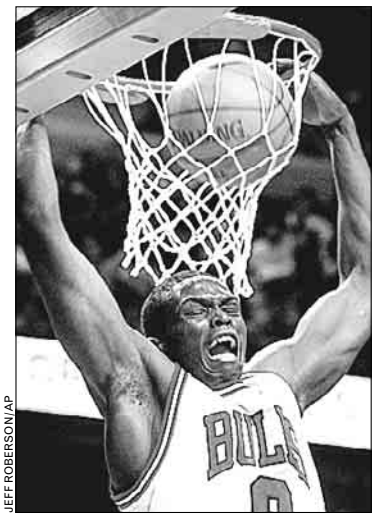
The four straight victories by the Chicago Bulls would hardly be worth a mention for most teams. But consider that the Bulls haven't strung together this many wins since Michael Jordan was wearing red and black — six-plus seasons, three coaches and umpteen players ago — and it's a sign they might finally be making some progress.

At 8-15, it probably is a little premature to start clearing space in the trophy case or booking Grant Park for a celebration. But for the first time since the dynasty was broken up, the Bulls are looking like a legitimate NBA team.

After opening the season 0-9 to match the franchise record for worst start, Chicago has won six of its last eight. If not for blowing a late lead against Dallas, the Bulls would have a six-game winning streak. Even with that awful start, this is Chicago's best record after 23 games since 1997-98, the last title run.

And unlike the last few seasons, when the Bulls tended to win a bunch in the last month against teams who were either out of it or resting up for the playoffs, their victories have been against some quality opponents. Three of the wins were against teams .500 or better, and one came on the road.

"We kept coming in here and just trying to get better, no matter what was going on," rookie Luol Deng said. "It was hard to go out and try your best and not get the result you wanted. That's what happens sometimes. But nine games in a row was tough." NANCY ARMOUR (AP)



JEFF ROBERSON/AP

Rookie Luol Deng is a reason why the Bulls are finally showing signs of life.

Late game: The Washington Wizards' game against the Sacramento Kings ended after Express' deadline on Tuesday. For results | **washingtonpost.com/sports**

Ruling Coming Soon on Brawl Appeal

NBA BRAWL | Arbitrator Roger Kaplan said Tuesday he will issue a ruling "in the next couple of days" on an appeal of the brawl-related suspensions given to four members of the Indiana Pacers.

The case is almost certain to move to federal court if Kaplan rules in favor of the players and orders reductions in some of the longest suspensions ever handed down by NBA Commissioner David Stern.

Ron Artest was suspended for the remainder of the season, Stephen Jackson received a 30-game suspension, Jermaine O'Neal 25 and Anthony Johnson six for their roles in a brawl with fans in Auburn Hills, Mich., during a Nov. 19 Pacers-Pistons game.

Kaplan must rule on two issues: Whether he has jurisdiction to hear the case, and the merits of the grievance itself — whether Stern had just cause to issue the lengthy suspensions.

Kaplan declined comment — aside from disclosing a rough timetable — in a telephone interview Tuesday. CHRIS SHERIDAN (AP)

NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

ATLANTIC	W	L	PCT.	GB	L10	CONF.
New York	13	11	.542	—	5-5	7-7
Boston	11	12	.478	1.5	6-4	6-7
Philadelphia	10	14	.417	3	4-6	9-6
Toronto	9	18	.333	5.5	2-8	4-10
New Jersey	7	16	.304	5.5	5-5	5-7

CENTRAL	W	L	PCT.	GB	L10	CONF.
Cleveland	14	10	.583	—	5-5	9-7
Indiana	12	11	.522	1.5	2-8	10-5
Detroit	12	11	.522	1.5	6-4	6-6
Chicago	8	15	.348	5.5	6-4	3-6
Milwaukee	6	15	.286	6.5	2-8	5-8

SOUTHEAST	W	L	PCT.	GB	L10	CONF.
Miami	19	7	.731	—	9-1	15-2
Washington	14	9	.609	3.5	6-4	10-6
Orlando	14	10	.583	4	5-5	6-5
Charlotte	6	14	.300	10	4-6	4-8
Atlanta	4	20	.167	14	2-8	2-11

WESTERN CONFERENCE

NORTHWEST	W	L	PCT.	GB	L10	CONF.
Seattle	18	5	.783	—	7-3	11-3
Minnesota	15	8	.652	3	7-3	12-3
Denver	13	12	.520	6	5-5	4-7
Portland	12	12	.500	6.5	4-6	4-7
Utah	11	15	.423	8.5	3-7	7-7

PACIFIC	W	L	PCT.	GB	L10	CONF.
Phoenix	22	3	.880	—	9-1	12-2
Sacramento	16	7	.696	5	8-2	8-7
L.A. Lakers	13	11	.542	8.5	5-5	8-8
L.A. Clippers	11	12	.478	10	4-6	4-9
Golden State	7	18	.280	15	4-6	2-15

SOUTHWEST	W	L	PCT.	GB	L10	CONF.
San Antonio	20	5	.800	—	8-2	9-4
Dallas	16	9	.640	4	6-4	10-7
Houston	12	13	.480	8	6-4	8-7
Memphis	12	15	.444	9	6-4	7-9
New Orleans	2	21	.087	17	1-9	2-13

Standings through Dec. 20 games

Sports

AU REVOIR? The 2005 World Swimming Championships might be moved from Montreal after Canada's federal government rejected a request Tuesday to put more money into the event. The championships have already received $30.8 million in public money out of a $48.8 million budget.

Eagles Seek Ways to Replace Owens

FOOTBALL | Terrell Owens invigorated the Philadelphia Eagles with his attitude, enthusiasm and MVP-type performance.

Donovan McNabb and Brian Westbrook will do their best to prove this wasn't a one-man offense.

A badly sprained ankle and broken leg will sideline Owens for the rest of the regular season and possibly the entire postseason — a devastating blow for a team that dominated the NFC and clinched home-field advantage throughout the playoffs with two games left.

But take heart, Philly fans: The Eagles still have McNabb and Westbrook on offense, and Jevon Kearse leads the stingiest defense in the NFL.

Sure, receivers Todd Pinkston, Freddie Mitchell, Greg Lewis and Billy McMullen are ordinary. But tight ends Chad Lewis and L.J. Smith are go-to targets for McNabb, while opponents still haven't found a way to stop Westbrook, who has 812 yards rushing and 73 catches for 703 yards.

"I don't think it is any step back too much with T.O. not being in there," McNabb said. "With those guys in there, we are still running our offense and those guys will have opportunities to make plays for us."

ROB MAADDI (AP)

GEORGE WIDMAN/AP

Eagles' QB Donovan McNabb may have to run more without Terrell Owens.

FIFA Fines Spain For Racial Taunts

SOCCER | World soccer's governing body, FIFA, on Tuesday fined Spain's national federation $87,000 for racist taunting by its fans during matches against England. According to Spain's Efe news agency, a Spanish soccer official said the federation would honor the fine. Taunts aimed at the black players on England's soccer team marred Spain's victory on Nov. 17. (AP)

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Cars

FROM LEASH TO BELT: A wave of products hitting the market is aimed at restraining people's pets. Products range from $20 canine seat belts, with lambswool padding that wraps around a dog's chest, to $65 car seats.

SUV Gets Greener Light

It's hard to make an efficient sport utility; electric motors help

ROAD TEST | Isn't a hybrid performance car an oxymoron?

The question applies to the Ford Escape Hybrid, the first hybrid SUV. Is it misguided to fit an SUV with a hybrid powertrain? Doesn't such a configuration squander much of the gain?

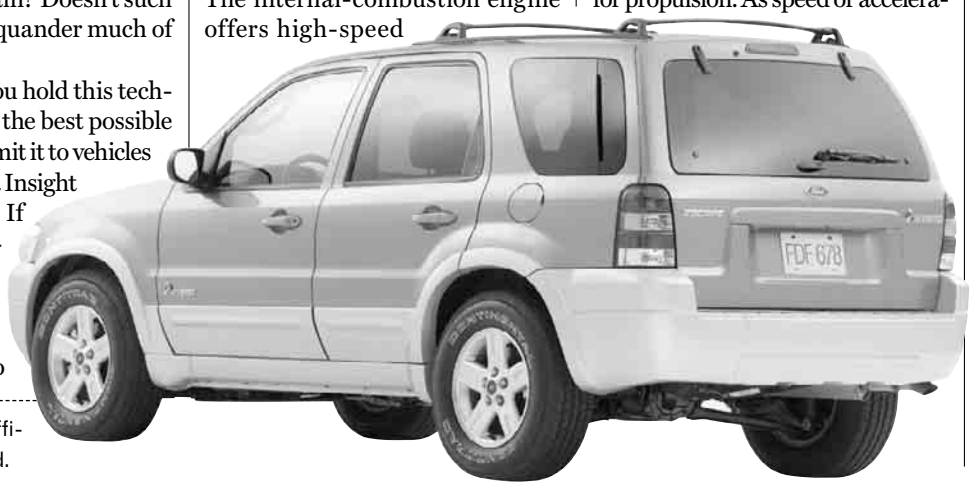
Trouble is, if you hold this technology hostage to the best possible application, you limit it to vehicles such as the Honda Insight and Toyota Prius. If the goal is improving overall fleet efficiency, hybrid technology must be disseminated to all sorts of vehicles appealing to a wide variety of buyers.

The Escape Hybrid is a retrofit of a vehicle designed back when the word "hybrid" brought to mind Father Gregor Mendel's pea pods. It works on marrying an electric motor to a high-efficiency engine and orchestrating the output depending on the speed and load. The internal-combustion engine offers high-speed efficiency while the electric motor provides low-speed torque.

There are two electric motors, one to drive the wheels and one to kick over the gas engine; both are integrated into the vehicle's continuously variable transmission modular unit.

In slow-speed city driving, the vehicle relies on its electric motor for propulsion. As speed or acceleration increases, the gas engine kicks in. Once at cruising speed, the gas engine takes over and the electric motor contributes when passing speed is required.

The Escape uses regenerative braking. As the vehicle slows, its kinetic energy turns the electric motor in reverse. That recharges the battery pack, which lasts the life of the vehicle. You can keep up with the electrons through the energy-flow display. DAN NEIL (LOS ANGELES TIMES)



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Front-Crash Tests Show Kia Is Worst

SAFETY | The Kia Spectra is the first vehicle since 2001 to get the insurance industry's worst safety rating in a frontal crash test, according to results released Sunday.

The Spectra got the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety's lowest rating of "poor" after a dummy's head, chest and legs were injured in the 40 mph test. The last car to get that rating was the Chevrolet Cavalier.

"Most manufacturers have figured out how to design vehicles to do a good job protecting people in frontal crashes," said Adrian Lund, the institute's chief operating officer. "Kia lags behind its competitors."

Kia Motors America Inc. said it was comfortable with the level of safety the Spectra provides.

"Occupant safety is a priority for Kia," the company said. DEE-ANN DURBIN (AP)

Do you suffer from Asthma?

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MOMENTOUS: Fed up with normal awards? The American Film Institute has announced this year's "Moments of Significance," including Marlon Brando's death, the success of "Fahrenheit 9/11" and the hoo-ha over "The Passion of the Christ."

Entertainment

Family Hamming

In 'Meet the Fockers,' fine actors behave, charmingly, like idiots

FILM | "Meet the Fockers" could have been one of those sequels that tries desperately to capitalize on the unexpected success of the original movie — in this case, "Meet the Parents," which was a huge hit in 2000.

So it's an unexpected pleasure to report that "Fockers" is an improvement on "Parents" — whose jokes dragged on too long — thanks largely to the presence of Dustin Hoffman and Barbra Streisand, who play Ben Stiller's parents, Bernie and Roz.

As a painfully candid and wildly uninhibited sex therapist, Streisand gets to verbally bounce off Hoffman (playing Greg Focker's overly friendly dad) and literally bounce off Robert De Niro (reprising his role as humorless former CIA agent Jack Byrnes) when she gives him a much-needed massage.

She and Hoffman look like they're having so much fun together, it's impossible not to laugh along with them.

But "Meet the Fockers" is laden with the same obligatory toilet humor as its predecessor, as Greg introduces his mother and father to the uptight, WASPy parents of his fiancee, Pam (Teri Polo).

The cherubic-looking grandson of Jack and Dina Byrnes (Blythe Danner) repeatedly makes the baby sign-language motion for poop (and his first word is one we can't repeat here). When the Byrneses drive down to Florida to meet the Fockers, their cat flushes the Focker's dog down the toilet. (And it's not funny to see the tiny, wet canine shivering.)

But there are enough redeeming moments, including a tour-de-force sequence involving baby Jack, super-strong glue, "Scarface" and a bottle of rum. And Dina Byrnes gets back in touch with her inner tigress after decades of marriage (thanks to some sock-puppet pointers from Roz) in a way that's sort of lovely and sweet — and funny, too.

Simply the idea of all these stars together — making fools of themselves on the same screen despite their individually impressive filmographies — is enough of an absurdly funny prospect to make "Meet the Fockers" worth seeing.

CHRISTY LEMIRE (AP)

TRACY BENNETT

IN-LAWS, OUTLAWS: Dina Byrnes learns a trick from free-spirited Mrs. Focker.

Old Folkies at Home

A DVD of Bob Dylan's 1966 and '74 tours is weird but compelling

DVD | Just when Bob Dylan fans think they've seen and heard it all, something like "Bob Dylan World Tours 1966-1974" (Highway 61 Entertainment) comes out of the woodwork.

Obsessive fans will savor the dozens of previously unseen photos brought to light from Dylan's infamous 1966 world tour — when he shocked audiences by playing with an electric band — and his 1974 North America jaunt with the Band.

But those same fans will also likely grimace at the antics of the narrator and "star" of the documentary, Dylan cover band lead singer Joel Gilbert. Gilbert dresses like Dylan, uses his own band's music as the soundtrack and even re-enacts Dylan's motorcycle accident on the back roads of Woodstock, N.Y.

Michael Moore he's not.

The best subject here is photographer Barry Feinstein, who took some of the most famous shots of Dylan already in circulation and was the official tour photographer in both 1966 and 1974.

Feinstein opens his Woodstock home and photo archives to Gilbert. Not only do we get to see some exquisite shots — like Dylan trying on clothes in a London boutique in 1966 and a shot of him smiling broadly on stage in 1974 — we also hear the photographer's memories.

Also interviewed are documentary filmmaker D.A. Pennebaker, journalist Al Aronowitz and self-proclaimed Dylanologist A.J. Weberman.

Essential? For most, certainly not. But for Dylan completists, it deserves a spot on the shelf. (AP)

BARRY FEINSTEIN

Bob Dylan on the 1966 tour, with his notoriously newly plugged-in guitar.

Today's Top Stops

FOR COMPLETE EVENT LISTINGS SEE WASHINGTONPOST.COM/ENTERTAINMENT

All Yesterday's Parties: Hard Tomorrows

1 Former Army of Me guitarist Robert Pierangeli is not the leader of the Hard Tomorrows, a cute-guy trio in search of a bassist (who probably doesn't have to be a cute guy, but it wouldn't hurt) playing the Black Cat backstage tonight.

Black Cat, 1811 14th St. NW; with Run Silent Run Deep, 9 p.m., $5; 202-667-7960. (U St.-Cardozo)

HARDTOMORROWS.COM

The Hard Tomorrows back when they were a cute-guy quartet with bassist.

Who Needs Xmas? Kosher Humor

2 Join Rockapella founder Sean Altman and Blender magazine music editor (and frequent music-TV commentary-show talking head) Rob Tannenbaum for "What I Like About Jew," an "unorthodox" evening of comedy, music and really bad Hanukkah jokes. Like "unorthodox."

Jammin' Java, 231 Maple Ave., Vienna; 8 p.m., $12; 703-255-1566.

Guided by Voice: 'Christmas Carol'

3 Charles Williams narrates "A Christmas Carol" — using all the voices, we hope; it's like a bedtime story that way — while early-music ensemble Hesperus accompanies the dramatic presentation with period music.

Kennedy Center, Millennium Stage, 2700 F St. NW, 6 p.m., free; 202-467-4600. (Foggy Bottom-GWU)

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Entertainment

TV TOUCHDOWN: Sports-themed sitcoms have a spotty track record, but NBC's taking a chance on "Ladder 49" hunk Morris Chestnut.

He's set to star in the sitcom "Dante," about a football star with an ego as big as his salary. "Bad Santa" bad boy Tony Cox co-stars.

Make Way for 'Harry'

Sixth 'Potter' adventure aims for July release

PUBLISHING | The sixth novel in J.K. Rowling's blockbuster Harry Potter series, "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince," will go on sale in several countries on July 16, publishers said Tuesday.

The book will be published in Britain, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa on the same day.

The new book, the publishers said, takes up the story of Harry Potter's sixth year at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry when the powers of the villain Voldemort and his followers are increasing day by day: "The author has already said that the Half-Blood Prince is neither Harry nor Voldemort."

In an earlier message on her Web site, Rowling wrote: "I know you all expected this to happen on Christmas Day, but I was sure that those of you who celebrate Christmas have better things to do on the day itself than fight your way into my study, whereas those of you who DON'T celebrate Christmas would definitely prefer not to wait until the 25th."

JOHN D. MCHUGH/AP

SORCERESS: Rowling's ready for July.

The publishers' statement and Rowling's Web site did not say whether the new book's length would top that of the industrial-sized "Order of the Phoenix."

Rowling has said that one of her characters will not survive her sixth book, but she refused to identify which one.

Rowling has said her teenage hero will survive until the seventh and final book in the series, but has refused to say whether he will reach adulthood. THOMAS WAGNER (AP)

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CC - Closed Caption · DV - Descriptive Video · OC - Open Caption

Advance Tickets Now On Sale. Meet the Fockers Opens December 22

HOFFMANN CENTER 22
Eisenhower Ave and Telegraph Road in Alexandria
703-998-4AMC

FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX (PG13) ✓ 1:45, 4:45, 7:30, 10:30
FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX (PG13) DV CC ✓ 12:50, 3:50, 6:40, 9:20
LEMONY SNICKET (PG) ✓ 11:30, 12:30, 2:15, 3:30, 5:00, 6:30, 8:00, 9:15, 10:45
SPANGLISH (PG13) ✓ 12:10, 1:00, 3:15, 4:00, 6:45, 7:15, 10:00, 10:20
OCEAN'S TWELVE (PG13) 11:35, 12:00, 12:45, 1:30, 2:00, 3:00, 3:45, 4:30, 5:00, 6:15, 7:00, 7:35, 8:15, 9:30, 9:55, 10:30
BLADE: TRINITY (R) 12:10, 12:40, 1:20, 3:05, 3:40, 4:15, 5:50, 6:35, 7:25, 8:40, 9:40, 10:10
CLOSER (R) 11:30, 1:50, 4:50, 7:50, 10:20
HOUSE OF FLYING DAGGERS (PG13) ✓ 1:10, 4:10, 7:10, 10:10
CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS (PG) 11:50, 2:10, 4:40, 7:20, 9:50, 10:30
FINDING NEVERLAND (PG) 12:20, 2:50, 5:25, 8:05, 10:25
BRIDGET JONES 2 (R) 7:40
NATIONAL TREASURE (PG) 3:50, 6:50, 9:35
SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS (PG) 12:00, 2:35, 5:10
THE POLAR EXPRESS (G) 11:40, 2:20, 5:05
THE INCREDIBLES (PG) 11:35, 2:20, 5:05, 7:55, 10:40
RAY (PG13) 7:35
SIDEWAYS (R) 12:35, 3:25, 6:25, 9:25

COURTHOUSE PLAZA 8
Courthouse and Birch Rd.
703-998-4AMC

FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX (PG13) ✓ 12:00, 2:30, 5:10, 7:50, 10:20
BLADE: TRINITY (R) 1:20, 4:20, 7:30, 10:00
CLOSER (R) 1:45, 4:30, 7:00, 9:40
ALEXANDER (R) 9:30 PM
CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS (PG) 12:00, 2:20, 5:30, 7:45, 9:55
NATIONAL TREASURE (PG) 1:00, 4:00, 7:15, 10:10
SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS (PG) 12:30, 2:45, 5:00
THE POLAR EXPRESS (G) 12:15, 2:30, 4:50, 7:10
RAY (PG13) 7:00, 10:05
SIDEWAYS (R) 1:30, 4:45, 7:30, 10:10

POTOMAC MILLS 18
2700 Potomac Mills Circle, Ste 886
703-998-4262

FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX (PG13) ✓ 1:30, 5:05, 7:35, 10:00
LEMONY SNICKET (PG) ✓ 12:30, 1:40, 3:00, 4:10, 5:30, 6:40, 7:55, 9:10
SPANGLISH (PG13) ✓ 12:45, 2:10, 4:00, 5:00, 6:50, 8:00, 9:45
OCEAN'S TWELVE (PG13) 12:35, 2:30, 3:15, 5:20, 5:55, 8:10, 9:00
OCEAN'S TWELVE (PG13) DV CC 1:35, 4:20, 7:10, 10:00
BLADE: TRINITY (R) 12:40, 1:50, 3:20, 4:30, 6:00, 7:00, 8:30, 9:35
CLOSER (R) 2:05, 5:10, 7:30, 9:50
ALEXANDER (R) 9:30 PM
CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS (PG) 1:15, 3:30, 5:40, 7:50, 9:55
FINDING NEVERLAND (PG) 1:20, 5:15, 7:40, 9:50
NATIONAL TREASURE (PG) 1:25, 4:25, 7:15, 9:55
SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS (PG) 1:00, 3:05, 5:25
KINSEY (R) 2:00, 5:45, 8:15
THE POLAR EXPRESS (G) 1:10, 4:15, 7:15
THE INCREDIBLES (PG) 12:50, 4:05, 7:05, 9:40
RAY (PG13) 7:45

MAZZA GALLERIE
Jenifer and Wisconsin
202-537-9553

SPANGLISH (PG13) ✓ 12:30, 1:15, 3:30, 4:15, 6:30, 7:15, 9:30, 10:00
OCEAN'S TWELVE (PG13) 1:00, 1:30, 3:45, 4:20, 7:00, 7:30, 9:45, 10:10
BRIDGET JONES 2 (R) 7:45, 10:05
NATIONAL TREASURE (PG) 12:00, 12:35, 3:00, 3:35, 5:45, 6:40, 8:30, 9:35
THE POLAR EXPRESS (G) 12:45, 3:05, 5:30

ACADEMY 8
Beltway Plaza on Greenbelt Rd., Center Court
703-998-4AMC

FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX (PG13) 1:50, 4:50, 7:40, 10:20
LEMONY SNICKET (PG) 1:40, 4:40, 7:30, 10:00
SPANGLISH (PG13) 1:20, 4:20, 7:20, 10:10
OCEAN'S TWELVE (PG13) 1:00, 2:00, 4:30, 5:10, 7:20, 8:00, 10:10, 10:40
BLADE: TRINITY (R) 12:50, 1:30, 4:00, 5:00, 7:00, 7:50, 9:50, 10:30
NATIONAL TREASURE (PG) 1:10, 4:10, 7:10, 10:00

COLUMBIA MALL 14
10300 Patuxent Parkway
410-423-0520

FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX (PG13) ✓ 1:50, 4:40, 7:30, 10:15
LEMONY SNICKET (PG) ✓ 1:20, 4:10, 7:00, 9:50
SPANGLISH (PG13) ✓ 12:50, 4:00, 7:05, 10:10
OCEAN'S TWELVE (PG13) 1:10, 2:00, 4:20, 7:25, 10:25
BLADE: TRINITY (R) 12:40, 3:20, 7:45, 10:30
CLOSER (R) 12:30, 2:50, 5:20, 8:00, 10:35
CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS (PG) 1:40, 4:15, 6:50, 9:45
FINDING NEVERLAND (PG) 2:20, 4:50, 7:25, 9:55
NATIONAL TREASURE (PG) 1:30, 4:30, 7:30, 10:30
NATIONAL TREASURE (PG) CC 1:30, 4:30, 7:30, 10:30
SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS (PG) 12:30, 2:40, 5:00
THE POLAR EXPRESS (G) 2:30, 5:05, 7:40, 10:05
THE INCREDIBLES (PG) 2:00, 4:55, 7:50, 10:35
SIDEWAYS (R) 1:15, 4:15, 7:10, 10:00

COUNTRY CLUB MALL 6
Country Club Mall on Vocke Rd near Route 68.
703-998-4AMC

FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX (PG13) ✓ 1:30, 4:15, 7:15, 9:45
LEMONY SNICKET (PG) ✓ 12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:05
SPANGLISH (PG13) ✓ 1:15, 4:00, 7:00, 9:55
CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS (PG) 12:00, 2:20, 4:45, 7:15, 9:30
NATIONAL TREASURE (PG) 1:15, 4:00, 7:00, 9:55
SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS (PG) 12:15, 2:20, 5:00
THE POLAR EXPRESS (G) 7:30, 9:45

UNION STATION 9
Located at Union Station
703-998-4AMC

FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX (PG13) DV CC ✓ 1:45, 4:30, 7:30
LEMONY SNICKET (PG) ✓ 2:10, 5:00, 8:00
OCEAN'S TWELVE (PG13) 1:45, 2:15, 4:30, 5:15, 7:30, 8:15
BLADE: TRINITY (R) 2:00, 2:30, 4:45, 5:30, 7:50, 8:30
NATIONAL TREASURE (PG) 2:30, 5:30, 8:30
SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS (PG) 2:15, 5:15
THE INCREDIBLES (PG) 2:00, 4:45, 7:50
RAY (PG13) 7:40

RIVERTOWNE 12
Exit 4A I-95, 1/2 mi. on Oxon Hill Rd.
703-998-4AMC

FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX (PG13) 5:30, 8:00
LEMONY SNICKET (PG) 5:50, 8:30
OCEAN'S TWELVE (PG13) 5:00, 5:40, 7:40, 8:20
BLADE: TRINITY (R) 5:20, 6:00, 7:50, 8:30
CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS (PG) 5:50, 8:20
NATIONAL TREASURE (PG) 5:10, 8:00
SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS (PG) 6:00, 8:10
THE POLAR EXPRESS (G) 5:20, 7:50
THE INCREDIBLES (PG) 5:10, 7:40
RAY (PG13) 5:00, 8:10

ACADEMY 6
Beltway Plaza on Greenbelt Rd., West Court
703-998-4AMC

ALEXANDER (R) 9:50 PM
CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS (PG) 12:50, 3:10, 5:30, 7:50, 10:10
SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS (PG) 12:40, 2:50, 5:00
AFTER THE SUNSET (PG13) 1:30, 4:20, 7:00, 9:40
THE POLAR EXPRESS (G) 1:20, 4:30, 7:20
THE INCREDIBLES (PG) 1:10, 4:40, 7:40, 10:30
RAY (PG13) 1:00, 4:00, 7:10, 10:20
THE GRUDGE (PG13) 7:30, 10:00

SPRINGFIELD MALL 10
Loisdale and Franconia Road
703-971-3991

FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX (PG13) ✓ 2:10, 5:10, 8:30
LEMONY SNICKET (PG) ✓ 2:00, 4:40, 8:15
SPANGLISH (PG13) ✓ 1:30, 4:30, 8:30
OCEAN'S TWELVE (PG13) 1:45, 4:50, 7:30, 8:45
BLADE: TRINITY (R) 2:20, 5:20, 8:45
CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS (PG) 1:45, 5:00, 8:15
NATIONAL TREASURE (PG) 1:30, 4:30, 8:00
SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS (PG) 2:15, 5:00, 8:00
THE POLAR EXPRESS (G) 2:00, 5:00
THE INCREDIBLES (PG) 1:50, 4:40, 7:45

Times for Tuesday, December 21, 2004

✓-**SPECIAL ENGAGEMENT**–No passes or discount coupons please.

GOING TO THE CHAPPELLE, OR NOT: Things over at the "Dave Chappelle Show" are moving ... very ... slooooowly. According to the New York Post, Chappelle has been ill lately and his writing staff isn't forking over much new material, so the sketch comedy show's third season is postponed until spring.

Entertainment

Animal Attraction

VIDEO GAMES | Whether you're a sucker for anything retro or just learning about the blue dude with a 'tude, this collection of the original "Sonic the Hedgehog" (PS2, Xbox) games is plain, clean fun.

Sega released a similar collection back in 2002 for Nintendo's GameCube, but this package is available for PlayStation 2 and Xbox. The package contains 13 games — all of the Sega Genesis games in the original Sonic franchise, six Sega Game Gear games, along with some extras and brand-new add-on games.

The original "Sonic the Hedgehog" remains the most fun, even though the graphics improved with each sequel and spinoff. Basically, you travel from level to level collecting rings while maneuvering around the changing landscapes, hidden passageways and pesky enemies, like the jumping fish. But the overall task of Sonic's adventure is to beat Dr. Robotnik and free the animals he has taken to his lair.

SEGA GENESIS/AP

The original "Sonic' is the most fun.

The best aspect of all the original Sonic games is the bonus rounds between levels where you bounce around collecting coins, or other versions where Sonic and his sidekick Tails run through a tube to collect a specific amount of coins and attain the prized Chaos Emeralds.

There are also some extras such as background on the characters and a few unlockable games. At only $20, this is a great title to add to anyone's collection.

MICHAEL FELBERBAUM (AP)

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Showtimes for: 12/22/04

MAGIC JOHNSON THEATRES
CAPITAL CENTER
800 Shopper's way, Largo 301-324-4220

BLADE: TRINITY (R) (12:40 3:40)6:40 9:40 8:00 10:35
THE POLAR EXPRESS (G) (11:50 2:30 5:30)
★ FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX (PG–13) (11:10 1:40 4:10)7:50 10:50
CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS (PG) (11:10 1:40 4:10)6:45 9:10
NATIONAL TREASURE (PG) (1:00 4:00)7:00 10:00
THE SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS MOVIE (PG) (11:05 1:05 4:05)7:05
BLADE: TRINITY (R) 9:00
★ LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS (PG) (11:20 2:00 4:40)7:40 10:40
★ OCEAN'S TWELVE (PG–13) (ON 2 SCREENS) (11:45 2:15 5:15) 8:15 10:45
RAY (PG–13) (11:30 3:00)6:30 10:35
THE INCREDIBLES (PG) (12:00 3:05)6:05 9:05
★ OCEAN'S TWELVE (PG–13) (ON 2 SCREENS) (11:15 4:15)10:05
BLADE: TRINITY (R) (1:45)7:20
★ MEET THE FOCKERS (PG–13) (1:30 4:30)7:30 10:30

Cineplex Odeon WISCONSIN AVE. CINEMAS
4000 Wisconsin Avenue N.W. 202-244-0882

★ LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS (PG) (1:20 3:50)6:20 9:10
★ FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX (PG–13) (1:40 4:20)7:00 9:40
★ THE PHANTOM (PG) (2:00 5:10)8:20
★ MEET THE FOCKERS (PG–13) (1:00 3:40)6:30 9:20
CLOSER (R) (1:30 4:00)6:40 9:30
FINDING NEVERLAND (PG) (1:50 4:15)6:50 9:15

Loews WHITE FLINT 5
North Bethesda 310-423-1014

★ LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS (PG) (1:30 4:05)6:55 9:25
★ SPANGLISH (PG–13) (1:05 3:50)6:40 9:30
NATIONAL TREASURE (PG) (1:20 4:00)6:45 9:35
★ OCEAN'S TWELVE (PG–13) (1:10 3:45)6:30 9:15
★ A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT (R) (1:00 3:55)6:50 9:45

Cineplex Odeon SHIRLINGTON 7
2772 South Randolph 703-671-0978

SIDEWAYS (R) (1:20 4:10)7:00 9:50
★ THE PHANTOM (PG) (12:50 4:00)6:50 9:40
CLOSER (R) (1:10 4:30)7:10 9:30
KINSEY (R) (12:40 3:30)6:30 9:20
★ HOUSE OF FLYING DAGGERS (PG–13) (1:10 4:20)7:20 10:00
BEING JULIA (R) (1:00 3:20)6:20 9:00
★ A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT (R) (12:30 3:10)6:10 9:10

Loews WHEATON PLAZA 11
Wheaton Plaza Shopping Center, Viers Mill Rd. Btwn. Georgia & University 901-949-9202

BLADE: TRINITY (R) (ON 2 SCREENS) (12:20 3:00 4:15 5:30) 8:00 9:40 10:20
OCEAN'S TWELVE (PG–13) (ON 2 SCREENS) (1:30 4:10)7:20 10:10
★ FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX (PG–13) (2:00 4:30)7:05 9:40
CLOSER (R) (12:40 3:20)6:10 9:20
THE INCREDIBLES (PG) (12:10 2:50 5:20)8:05 10:30
ALEXANDER (R) 9:00
THE SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS MOVIE (PG) (1:10 3:40)6:40
RAY (PG–13) 7:00 10:00
THE POLAR EXPRESS (G) (2:10 5:00)
★ LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS (PG) (1:40 4:20)7:30 9:50
★ SPANGLISH (PG–13) (12:00 3:10)6:20 9:10
NATIONAL TREASURE (PG) (1:00 4:00)7:10 10:00
★ MEET THE FOCKERS (PG–13) (12:50 4:15)6:50 9:40

CINEPLEX ODEON CINEMA
5100 Wisconsin Avenue 202-966-7248
Friendship Heights

★ A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT (R) (1:45 4:45)8:00

Cineplex Odeon TYSONS FARIFAX SQUARE
8065 Leesburgh Pike 703-506-9857

THE INCREDIBLES (PG) (1:10 3:40)6:40 9:20
★ MEET THE FOCKERS (PG–13) (12:05 2:40 5:15)7:40 10:10
★ LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS (PG) (12:00 2:20 4:40)7:00 9:30
★ SPANGLISH (PG–13) (12:40 3:30)6:30 9:40
CLOSER (R) (12:20 2:50 5:10)7:30 10:10
OCEAN'S TWELVE (PG–13) (12:50 3:50)7:10 9:50
★ FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX (PG–13) (12:10 2:30 4:50)7:20 10:00
THE POLAR EXPRESS (G) (1:00)
NATIONAL TREASURE (PG) (3:20)6:50 9:45

Cineplex Odeon DUPONT CIRCLE 5
1350 19th Street 202-972-9966
Dupont Circle

WHAT THE BLEEP! DO WE KNOW?!(NR) (1:40 4:20)7:10 9:50
THE MOTORCYCLE DIARIES (R) (1:00 3:50)6:50 9:45
BRIDGET JONES: THE EDGE OF REASON (R) (2:00 4:40)7:20 10:00
KINSEY (R) (ON 2 SCREENS) (1:20 4:10)7:00 9:40
FINDING NEVERLAND (PG) (1:10 3:40)6:30 9:20

Loews GEORGETOWN
3111 K Street, N.W. 202-342-6033

ESCAPE TO CLASSIC HOLLYWOOD THURSDAY AT 7PM

★ MEET THE FOCKERS (PG–13) (11:30 12:40 2:10 3:20 4:50) 6:00 7:30 8:40 10:10
★ THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA (PG–13) (11:00 12:10 2:10 3:20 5:20) 6:30 8:30 9:40
★ SPANGLISH (PG–13) (ON 2 SCREENS) (11:00 1:50 4:40) 6:10 7:30 9:00 10:20
★ HOUSE OF FLYING DAGGERS (PG–13) (1:20 4:00)6:40 9:20
★ FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX (PG–13) (1:00 3:50)6:30 9:10
★ LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS (PG) (11:30 2:00 4:30)7:10 9:40
OCEAN'S TWELVE (PG–13) (1:10 4:10)7:00 9:50
CLOSER (R) (12:40 3:00 5:20)7:40 10:00
SIDEWAYS (R) (1:30 4:20)7:20 10:10
BLADE: TRINITY (R) (12:10 3:50 5:30)8:20 10:50
NATIONAL TREASURE (PG) 6:00 8:50
THE INCREDIBLES (PG) (12:20 3:10)
THE POLAR EXPRESS (G) (12:30 3:20)

Cineplex Odeon UPTOWN
3426 Connecticut Avenue 202-966-8805
Cleveland Park

RAY (PG–13) (1:00 4:30)8:00
Advanced tickets on sale now for The Aviator

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701 Seventh St NW 800-FANDANGO 1721#

MEET THE FOCKERS (PG-13) DIG ★ (Stadium) (1105 1145 145 225 425 505) 705 745 945 1025
PHANTOM OF THE OPERA (PG-13) DIG (Stadium) (1230 110 340 415) 650 730 955 1035
FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX (PG-13) DIG (Stadium) (1140 220 455) 735 1015
LEMONY SNICKET'S SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS (PG) DIG ★ (Stadium) (1125 155 430) 700 935
SPANGLISH (PG-13) DIG ★ (Stadium) (100 400) 710 1005
BLADE: TRINITY (R) - ID REQ'D DIG (Stadium) (1115 200 445) 740 1030
CLOSER (R) - ID REQ'D DIG (Stadium) (1135 215 450) 720 950
FINDING NEVERLAND (PG) DIG (Stadium) (1110 140 410) 655 930
NATIONAL TREASURE (PG) DIG (Stadium) (105 405) 645 725 940 1020
POLAR EXPRESS (G) DIG (Stadium) (1130 205 420)
THE INCREDIBLES (PG) DIG (Stadium) (1100 150 435) 715 1010
RAY (PG-13) DIG (Stadium) (1155 315) 640 1000

Now Hiring-Apply at Theatre

BALLSTON COMMON STADIUM 12
Ballston Common Mall, Glebe Rd, Arlington
(703) 527-9466 800-FANDANGO 377#

MEET THE FOCKERS (PG-13) DIG ★ (1110 1155 150 235 420 510) 710 800 945 1035
PHANTOM OF THE OPERA (PG-13) DIG (1040 1215 155 330 505) 700 815 1005
LEMONY SNICKET'S SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS (PG) DIG ★ (1135 215 450) 735 1010
SPANGLISH (PG-13) DIG ★ (1030 135 425) 725 1020
HOUSE OF FLYING DAGGERS (PG-13) DIG (1045 140 430) 715 955
OCEAN'S TWELVE (PG-13) DIG (1035 100 130 400 435) 705 740 1000 1030
FINDING NEVERLAND (PG) DIG (1050 120 410) 650 940
KINSEY (R) - ID REQ'D DIG (1115 200 440) 730 1015
THE INCREDIBLES (PG) DIG (1025 125 415) 655 950

Now Hiring-Apply at Theatre

BOWIE STADIUM 14
5200 Major Lansdale Blvd 800-FANDANGO 454#

MEET THE FOCKERS (PG-13) DIG ★ (1230 130 330 430) 640 730 940 1030
LEMONY SNICKET'S SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS (PG) DIG ★ (100 400) 705 1000
CLOSER (R) - ID REQ'D DIG (120 420) 720 1005
FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX (PG-13) DIG (1250 405) 700 1010
SPANGLISH (PG-13) DIG ★ (1220 340) 700 1010
OCEAN'S TWELVE (PG-13) DIG ★ (1235 135 335 435) 635 735 935 1035
BLADE: TRINITY (R) - ID REQ'D DIG (1245 345) 710 1015
NATIONAL TREASURE (PG) DIG (105 410) 715 1040
THE INCREDIBLES (PG) DIG (125 425) 725 1020
SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS (PG) DIG (1210 235 500)
POLAR EXPRESS (G) DIG (1200 230 510) 750 1025
CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS (PG) DIG (110 355) 650 950
RAY (PG-13) DIG 725 1050

Now Hiring-Apply at Theatre

ROCKVILLE CENTER STADIUM 13
Rockville Town Center (301) 340-9390
800-FANDANGO 248#

MEET THE FOCKERS (PG-13) (1230 100 330 430) 710 740 1000 1030
PHANTOM OF THE OPERA (PG-13) (1215 330) 700 1015
FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX (PG-13) (115 415) 720 1010
LEMONY SNICKET'S SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS (PG) ★ (1200 245 530) 810 1050
SPANGLISH (PG-13) ★ (1210 355) 715 1025
OCEAN'S TWELVE (PG-13) (110 310 410) 645 745 950
BLADE: TRINITY (R) - ID REQ'D (1245 345) 705 1020
CLOSER (R) - ID REQ'D (1205 300) 640 935
FINDING NEVERLAND (PG) (1220 320) 650 920
NATIONAL TREASURE (PG) (1240 350) 655 1005
SIDEWAYS (R) - ID REQ'D (125 435) 730 1040
SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS (PG) (1235)

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Television

OH, TITULAR IRONY: Play "Taps" for "Dead Like Me" — the snarky Showtime drama starring Ellen Muth as a teenager toiling in the afterlife is no more. The cable channel buried the series in a shallow grave after it lost first-season buzz and critical curiosity.

ON TV TONIGHT

WHO ISN'T RUNNING?

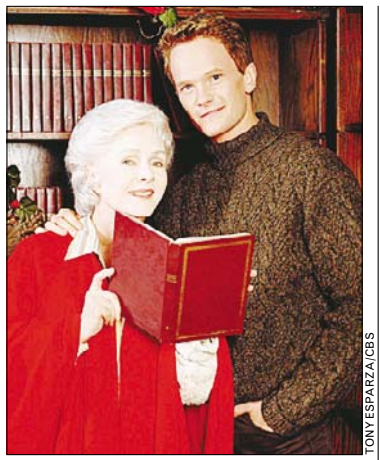
THE WEST WING (9 p.m., NBC) On the eve of the holidays, President Bartlet is visited by his three daughters and is shocked to learn that his son-in-law (Steven Eckholdt) wants to run for Congress in New Hampshire.

WE MISS YOU, JERRY

LAW & ORDER (10 p.m., NBC) repeats last year's season finale, featuring Lenny Briscoe's (Jerry Orbach) last case. "Law" just hasn't been the same without Lenny.

POINSETTIA POISONING: DELIRIUM SETS IN

Catch these Christmas movies before the programming elves wrap them up, store them in mothballs and shut them away in the video attic for another year:



TONY ESPARZA/CBS

Debbie Reynolds and Neil Patrick Harris in some heart-warming thing.

Santa gets a makeover in the 2004 holiday comedy **A VERY COOL CHRISTMAS** (7 p.m., Lifetime), starring George Hamilton and Donna Mills. A yuppie (Neil Patrick Harris) returns home to help his ailing grandmother in the 1998 weepie **THE CHRISTMAS WISH** (9 p.m., Lifetime). Michael Caine stars in **THE MUPPET CHRISTMAS CAROL** (8 p.m., Disney), a 1992 adaptation of the Dickens tale featuring Kermit, Miss Piggy and their entourage. A confused dog (voice of Drew Barrymore) decides that Santa needs her in the 1998 animated special **OLIVE, THE OTHER REINDEER** (8 p.m., Cartoon Network). Arctic oil exploration threatens the existence of Christmas itself in the 1984 shocker **THE NIGHT THEY SAVED CHRISTMAS** (9 p.m., Hallmark), starring Art Carney, Jaclyn Smith and Paul Le Mat. It's amazing they haven't yet made a movie about Santa's workshop being imperiled by global warming ... hey! Call my agent! KEVIN MCDONOUGH (UNITED FEATURE SYNDICATE)

Children at Home

An annual special promotes the greatest gift of all

OPEN HOUSE | Jamie Foxx hosts "A Home for the Holidays 2004" (8 p.m., CBS), now in its sixth year, a special celebrating and promoting adoption. Foxx will perform several musical numbers, as will musical guests Rod Stewart, the Black Eyed Peas, Ashlee Simpson, Chaka Khan, Train and Kenny G.

Taped segments will present stories about adopted children and how they have changed the families who opened their doors to them. Every "Home" special ends with a reminder that there are more than a half-million children in foster care in the United States. KEVIN MCDONOUGH (UNITED FEATURE SYNDICATE)

CBS

Foxx with "Home" guest Rene Russo.

12.22.04		6:00 PM	6:30	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00	11:30
LOCAL CHANNELS	WRC 4	News CC		NBC Nightly News	Access Hollywood	Will & Grace "Queens for a Day"		The West Wing "Abu El Banat" CC		Law & Order "C.O.D." CC		News CC	The Tonight Show
	WTTG 5	The Simpsons	The Simpsons	Friends CC	Seinfeld CC	That '70s Show	Quintuplets (N)	Nanny 911 "The Johnston Family" (N)		News		Friends CC	Drew Carey
	WJLA 7	News CC	ABC Wld News	Wheel of Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Lost "Walkabout" CC		Lost "White Rabbit" CC		Wife Swap "Pitts/Policchio" CC		News CC	(:35) Nightline
	WUSA 9	News CC	CBS News	USA Tonight	Ent. Tonight	A Home for the Holidays 2004 (N)		King of Queens	Center-Univ	CSI: NY "Creatures of the Night"		News CC	(:35) Late Show
	WDCA 20	Girlfriends CC	Girlfriends CC	Malcolm-Mid.	Malcolm-Mid.	Kevin Hill "Making the Grade" CC		Kevin Hill "Homework" CC		That '70s Show	That '70s Show	Every-Raymond	Dharma & Greg
	WMPT 22	The NewsHour With Jim Lehrer (N)		Business Rpt.	Artworks-Week	Mormon Tabernacle Choir		Peter and Paul-Christian		Peter and Paul-Christian		Sing Christmas	To Manor Born
	WETA 26	BBC World News	Business Rpt.	The NewsHour With Jim Lehrer (N)		Great Performances: Andrea Bocelli		Mormon Tabernacle Choir		The Ten Tenors: Larger Than Life		Charlie Rose (N) CC	
	WHUT 32	At Howard		BBC World News	MoneyWise CC	American Family: Journey of Dreams		Chris Isaak Christmas		BBC World News	Tavis Smiley	Charlie Rose (N) CC	
	WBDC 50	The Parkers	Steve Harvey	The Parkers	Steve Harvey	Smallville "Devoted" CC		Big Man on Campus (N) CC		Will & Grace	Just Shoot Me	Will & Grace	Blind Date (N)
BASIC CABLE	A&E	City Confidential CC		American Justice: Confession		American Justice: Appalachia		Growing Up Gotti	Growing Up Gotti	Biography "Steven Seagal" (N) CC		Crossing Jordan "Conspiracy" CC	
	Animal	The Crocodile Hunter CC		Most Extreme "Oddities" CC		The Jeff Corwin Experience CC		Animal Face-Off "Gorilla vs. Leopard"		Animal Cops Detroit CC		The Jeff Corwin Experience CC	
	BET	106 & Park: BET's Top 10 Live			Access Granted	The Parkers	Girlfriends CC	Coming to the Stage		Club Comic View		BET Nightly News	Music Special
	Bravo	(4:00) ★★★ "Silverado" (1985)		The West Wing (Part 1 of 2) CC		Project Runway CC		Project Runway CC		Project Runway CC		The West Wing (Part 1 of 2) CC	
	Comedy	Comedy Central's Last Laugh '04 CC			Mad TV "Holiday '98" CC		Crank Yankers	Reno 911! CC	South Park CC	South Park CC	Drawn Together	★★ "The Big Lebowski" (1998) CC	
	Court	NYPD Blue "Bats Off to Larry" CC		Cops CC	Cops CC	The Investigators Suicide claim.		Forensic Files	Psychic Detect	The Investigators "Heartshot" (N)		Caught	Masterminds
	Discovery	Monster Nation CC		American Chopper CC		The Ice Hotel (N)		MythBusters "Christmas Special" (N)		World Biker Build-Off		The Ice Hotel	
	DISCH	Chicago Hope "Waging Bull" CC		Trauma: Life in the ER CC		160 Lb. Tumor (N)		Plastic Surgery: Before and After		Miracle Steps A tetraplegic. CC		160 Lb. Tumor	
	Disney	Even Stevens	Lizzie McGuire	Sister, Sister	That's So Raven	★★★ "The Muppet Christmas Carol" (1992) Michael Caine. CC				Lizzie McGuire	Sister, Sister	Even Stevens	Boy Meets World
	E!	Diary of an Affair	Diary of an Affair	E! News (N)	Life Is Great	Lionel Richie Hollywood Story		Bad Girls of Reality TV: True Story		The Price Is Right: True Story		Howard Stern	Howard Stern
	FX	Fear Factor CC		King of the Hill	King of the Hill	★★ "Someone Like You" (2001, Comedy) Ashley Judd, Greg Kinnear, Hugh Jackman.					Fear Factor CC		King of the Hill
	HGTV	Wknd Warriors	Landscapers	Curb Appeal	House Hunters	Renovation	Bldg. Character	Sensible Chic	Mission: Orgnz	Curb Appeal (N)	Curb Appeal	Painted House	Dream House
	Family	7th Heaven "The Prodigal Father"		Drummer Boy	C'mas Snow	"The Christmas Secret" (2000, Fantasy) Richard Thomas, Beau Bridges. CC				Whose Line?	Whose Line?	The 700 Club CC	
	History	The Wrath of God CC		Modern Marvels CC		Modern Marvels CC		Full Throttle "1967 VW Beetle" (N)		Modern Marvels CC		Modern Marvels CC	
	Lifetime	The Golden Girls	The Golden Girls	"A Very Cool Christmas" (2004) George Hamilton, Brooke Nevin. CC				★★ "The Christmas Wish" (1998) Neil Patrick Harris, Debbie Reynolds. CC				The Nanny CC	The Golden Girls
	MTV	Nick & Jessica	Nick & Jessica	Nick & Jessica	Aviator Special	Hard Rock Live "Best of Special" (N)		Nick & Jessica's Family Christmas		Pimp My Ride	Pimp My Ride	True Life Travelling Europe.	
	NICK	Amanda	Rugrats CC	Jimmy Neutron	Fairly Oddparents	SpongeBob	Hey Arnold! CC	Full House CC	Full House CC	Fresh Prince	The Cosby Show	Roseanne CC	Roseanne CC
	SCIFI	Stargate SG-1 "Double Jeopardy"		Beyond Belief: Fact or Fiction? CC		Proof Positive: Paranormal		Ghost Hunters CC		Scare Tactics	Scare Tactics	Proof Positive: Paranormal	
	SPIKE	World's Wildest Police Videos CC		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation		★★★★ "The Godfather" (1972, Drama) Marlon Brando. A mafia patriarch tries to hold his empire together. CC					
	TBS	Seinfeld CC	Seinfeld CC	Every-Raymond	Every-Raymond	Friends CC	(:35) Friends	(:10) Family Guy	(:40) Family Guy	Sex and the City	(:45) Sex and the City CC		Real Gilligan
	TLC	Clean Sweep Eliminating clothes.		In a Fix "The Fiesta House" CC		Mostly True Stories: Urban Legends		In a Fix "New Bohemian" (N)		Extreme Surgery II CC		Mostly True Stories: Urban Legends	
	TNT	Charmed "Exit Strategy" CC		Law & Order "Denial" CC (DVS)		★★ "Jack Frost" (1998, Fantasy) Michael Keaton, Kelly Preston.				★★ "Jack Frost" (1998, Fantasy) Michael Keaton, Kelly Preston.			
	USA	★★★ "Bowfinger" (1999, Comedy) Steve Martin, Eddie Murphy.				Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		Law & Order: Criminal Intent "Stray"	
	VHI	Princess Bride	★★ "Rock Star" (2001) Mark Wahlberg. A singer lands a gig with his heavy-metal heroes.					★★ "Austin Powers: International Man of Mystery" (1997) Mike Myers.				★★★ "The Princess Bride" (1987)	
SPAN.	TELEM	Corte-Pueblo	Noti-Telemndo	Anita No Te Rajes		La Mujer en el Espejo		Gitanas		Te Voy a Enseñar a Querer		Noticiero Tel.	Laura
	UNIV	Viviana	Noticiero Univ	La Mujer de Madera		Rubí		Amor Real		Don Francisco Presenta		Primer Impacto	Noticiero Univ.
SPORTS	ESPN	SportsCenter (Live) CC		NFL Live (Live) CC		College Football GMAC Bowl -- Bowling Green vs. Memphis. From Mobile, Ala. (Live) CC							SportsCenter
	ESPN2	2004 World Series of Poker		2004 World Series of Poker		College Basketball Illinois vs. Missouri. From St. Louis. (Live) CC				NBA Basketball Memphis Grizzlies at Golden State Warriors. (S Live) CC			
	CSN	I, Max (N)	SportsNite CC	College Basketball St. Joseph's at Old Dominion. (Live)				College Basketball Wake Forest at New Mexico. (Live)				SportsNite CC	Best-Sports
NEWS	CNN	Lou Dobbs Tonight CC		Anderson Cooper 360 CC		Paula Zahn Now CC		Larry King Live CC		NewsNight With Aaron Brown CC		Lou Dobbs Tonight	
	FNC	Special Report (Live) CC		The Fox Report With Shepard Smith		The O'Reilly Factor (Live) CC		Hannity & Colmes (Live) CC		On the Record-Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor	
	MSNBC	The Abrams Report (Live)		Hardball (Live) CC		Countdown With Keith Olbermann		Deborah Norville Tonight Joan Rivers.		Scarborough Country (Live)		Hardball CC	
MOVIES	AMC	(5:00) ★★★ "The Longest Yard" (1974) Burt Reynolds.			★★★ "The Blues Brothers" (1980, Comedy) John Belushi, Dan Aykroyd, Aretha Franklin. 'R'					FilmFakers "Song Island" CC		★★★ "The Blues Brothers" (1980)	
	TCM	(:15) ★★ "Courage of Lassie" (1946, Adventure) Elizabeth Taylor. 'G'				★★★ "Yours, Mine and Ours" (1968, Comedy) Lucille Ball. 'NR'				★★★ "Parenthood" (1989, Comedy-Drama) Steve Martin. 'PG-13'			
	HBO	★★ "S.W.A.T." (2003, Action) Samuel L. Jackson. 'PG-13' CC				Reverse of the Curse of the Bambino		The Wire "Mission Accomplished"		Inside the NFL (N) CC		(:05) Carnivale "Insomnia" CC	
	MAX	(5:30) ★★★ "Seabiscuit" (2003, Drama) Tobey Maguire. 'PG-13' CC				(:15) ★★★ "Intolerable Cruelty" (2003) George Clooney. 'PG-13' CC				★★ "Torque" (2004) Martin Henderson. 'PG-13' CC			The Devil's Own
	SHOW	(5:30) ★ "Lover's Prayer" (2000) CC		(:15) ★★ "Dangerous Minds" (1995) Michelle Pfeiffer. iTV. 'R' CC				HUFF "That F...ing Cabin" (iTV) CC		★★★ "Monster" (2003, Biography) Charlize Theron. iTV. 'R' CC			
	TMC	★★ "Nevada" (1997, Drama) Amy Brenneman, Kirstie Alley. 'R' CC				★★ "The Golden Child" (1986) Eddie Murphy. 'PG-13'			(:35) ★ "Killing Me Softly" (2002) Heather Graham. 'R'			(:15) ★★★ "Ash Wednesday" (2002)	
	STARZ!	(5:50) ★★ "Meet Joe Black" (1998) Brad Pitt. The Grim Reaper assumes the form of a recently deceased man. CC						★★★ "Calendar Girls" (2003) Helen Mirren, Julie Walters. 'PG-13' CC				★★ "The Hulk" (2003) Eric Bana.	
	ENCORE	(:10) ★★ "Tango & Cash" (1989, Drama) Sylvester Stallone. 'R' CC				★★★ "Quick Change" (1990) Bill Murray. 'R' CC			★★★ "Red Dragon" (2002, Suspense) Anthony Hopkins. 'R' CC				(:35) Men of War

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Assist w/personal care, household duties, supervision of other activities for adults with mental retardation in their homes. Part time, full time, split shifts available. Locations in DC metro area, car a plus. Apply in person M-F 9am-5pm. Total Care Services 5780 2nd St. NE, Washington DC 20011. 202-526-1133.

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Look* out

* TRENDS, CULTURE, DISCOVERIES, IDEAS, PEOPLE

ALAN MARLER/AP

METAL GEAR: Curator Stephen Paul Jackson keeps his aluminum collection shining and stocked with themed ornaments for the 100 curious visitors he said his Brevard, N.C., museum attracts every day.

Silver Boughs

Holidays

'Tis the season to be tacky at an aluminum Christmas tree show

The guest book was blank at the world's only museum for aluminum Christmas trees.

Either no one had been visiting, or visitors were ashamed to admit having stopped at a shrine to holiday tackiness.

What began as a single shiny tree, retrieved from the trash in 1991, has become an obsession for curator Stephen Paul Jackson. The 48-year-old home designer has fond feelings for his eversilver tree collection.

"I really like the retro look of the 1950s," Jackson said. The museum is in a college music hall in Brevard, N.C. "As a designer, I like their simplicity. They don't try to compete with a real tree."

Jackson started his collection 13 years ago in defense of the fake Christmas tree. If it's schlock fans want, Jackson is happy to oblige.

The full name of his museum: The Aluminum Tree and Aesthetically Challenged Seasonal Ornament Museum and Research Center.

This year's collection includes 30 trees. Jackson even put a satellite museum on tour by shipping 25 more trees to a display in Nashville.

Christmas music floats through Jackson's treasure grove of silver, green and blue trees.

The "Elvis Tree" has photos of the King hanging from its branches. The "Toilet Tree" has copper-colored floats for ornaments and is adorned with strands of pink, yellow and blue shower curtain connectors. The tree skirt is a toilet seat cover, and there's a matching knitted cover for a spare role of TP.

The museum also features a silver-belled "Bing Crosby Tree" and a blue-limbed "Frank Sinatra Tree" that pays tribute to Ol' Blue Eyes.

One tree sports pink flamingo ornaments, while another, sent from Australia, features koala bear and kangaroo ornaments.

The "Election Bush" has a political theme, and was particularly popular four years ago, during the Florida recount, Jackson said: "We decorated it with swinging chads."

The peak of holiday season tackiness may be Jackson's "Tammy Faye Tree," complete with one-time televangelist Tammy Faye Bakker's signature false eyelashes, a pair of pink high heels and ornaments from Heritage USA, the Christian theme park near Charlotte that she and then-husband Jim Bakker operated in the 1980s.

"The first tree I got came from a friend who found it in a neighbor's trash," he said. "I thought it was funny, so I had a tacky ornament tree-trimming party."

This year, he relocated the display to Brevard College's American Legion hall. Jackson said the museum averages about 100 visitors per day. PAUL NOWELL (AP)

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Laura Davis

Gene Weingarten | Fighting Back

The Post's **GENE WEINGARTEN** was online Tuesday from his home, having succumbed to his "biannual back-goes-out thing" | **washingtonpost.com/liveonline**

Don't take Aleve, whatever you do. According to the news, it has joined the list of Formerly Wonderful Things That We Now Think Will Kill You.

True fact: I was on Vioxx for a year. Then, after the Vioxx withdrawal, the doctor switched me to Celebrex. Aleve was next.

I am inclined to stay on Celebrex unless it is yanked. Everything is dangerous, to one degree or another. And knee arthritis hurts.

What can I do to stifle my cries of anguish at work? My officemates are starting to complain. How do you keep up morale at the Post?

By keeping people interested. Every so often I see to it that there is a hostage situation within a block of the Post building.

I bought your book about being a hypochondriac. Unfortunately for you, I bought it used from Half.com, so you have not made any money off of it. Sorry.

I wouldn't have made any money off it if you bought 1,000 copies from Amazon. You don't know the book biz, do you?

What's the smartest thing you ever did — and let's avoid cop-outs like "marrying my wife" or "having kids"?

Hm. OK, with that caveat aside, it was probably phoning Dave Barry one day in 1982 and telling him I thought he had talent and would he like to write for me.

Why do some people from the South (in particular) have such deplorable grammar? Where in the world did the word "ain't" originate?

In my opinion, saying "ain't I?" is better than saying "Aren't I?" Because it is closer in sound to "amn't I?" which is in my opinion the only acceptable contraction.

➜ Today on Live Online

NOON: Michael Keegan, the Post's assistant managing editor for news art, takes questions on graphics, layouts and illustrations.

NOON: Post advice columnist Carolyn Hax listens to your holiday stories — heart-warming and horrifying.

1:30 P.M.: D.C. Council member Adrian M. Fenty discusses his opposition to the baseball stadium deal.

The Duplex | *Glenn McCoy*

Pearls Before Swine | *Stephan Pastis*

Letters

Can the Stereotypes, Please

WHILE I APPLAUD the writer of Tuesday's letter disputing the statement that all young girls dream about being a ballerina for being an individual and pointing out a stereotype, I was just as annoyed to read her remark about not aspiring to be a "garbage collector." I believe there are many children who do aspire to be garbage collectors, perhaps because it's what their mothers do or they just want to clean up the world. It is admirable to have the decency to pick up the garbage that someone in a more "glamorous job" has tossed away. Speak up against ignorant assumptions, but don't make them.

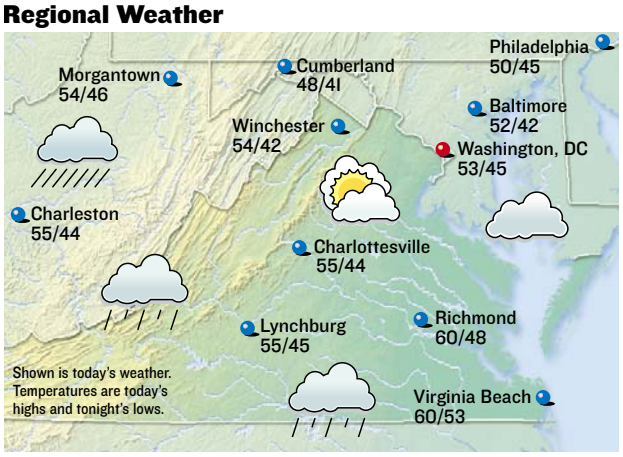
—KELVIN POSEY
Rockville, Md.

✤ **Baseball in Washington:** What do you think about the D.C. government's baseball stadium debate? Drop us a line at **inbox@readexpress.com**

5 Day Forecast for the Washington Area

Today	Tonight	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Partly sunny, a mild afternoon	Overcast, mild, late-night rain	Rain, windy, mild	Breezy, partly sunny	Very cold, partly sunny	Cold, mostly sunny
53°	45°	56° / 38°	43° / 24°	30° / 18°	36° / 24°

Regional Weather



All forecasts and maps provided by **AccuWeather, Inc. ©2004**

Almanac

Washington, D.C., through 4 p.m. Tues.

Temperature

High	42°
Low	21°
Normal high	45°
Normal low	31°
Average humidity	43%

Precipitation

24 hours ending 4 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	2.16"
Normal month to date	2.05"
Year to date	41.60"
Last year to date	60.23"
Normal year to date	38.46"

For up-to-the-minute weather, see: **washingtonpost.com/weather**

Regional Forecast

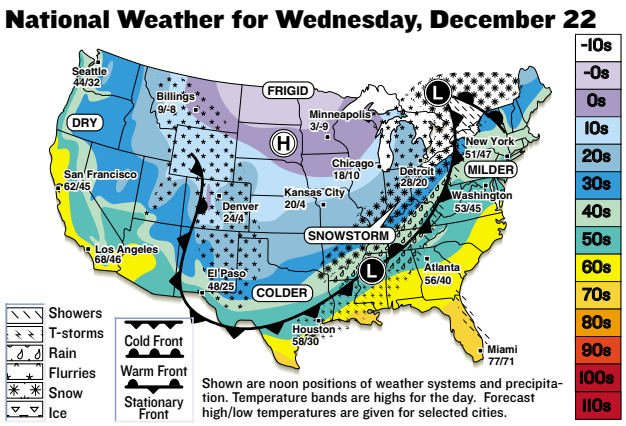
D.C. Metro: Today, partly sunny, milder afternoon. High 53. Wind south to southeast 7-14 mph. Tonight, cloudy, mild, drizzle. Low 45.

Sun and Moon

Sunrise today	7:24 a.m.
Sunset tonight	4:50 p.m.
Moonrise today	2:02 p.m.
Moonset today	3:44 a.m.

Full	Last	New	First
Dec 26	Jan 3	Jan 10	Jan 17

National Weather for Wednesday, December 22



Shown are noon positions of weather systems and precipitation. Temperature bands are highs for the day. Forecast high/low temperatures are given for selected cities.

National Cities

City	Today Hi/Lo/W	Thur. Hi/Lo/W
Atlanta	56/40/r	48/26/pc
Boston	46/40/pc	50/44/r
Chicago	18/10/pc	16/-2/sf
Dallas	36/18/r	32/14/pc
Denver	24/4/sf	16/6/sf
Honolulu	79/67/sh	80/68/sh
Los Angeles	68/46/s	68/44/s
Miami	77/71/sh	83/67/t
New York City	51/47/c	53/36/r
Orlando	76/62/sh	76/54/t
Seattle	44/32/pc	44/34/pc

World Cities

City	Today Hi/Lo/W	Thur. Hi/Lo/W
Amsterdam	43/42/r	49/40/sh
Athens	49/37/sh	47/37/sh
Berlin	32/31/sn	47/41/r
Buenos Aires	86/66/s	88/68/s
Calgary	10/-3/pc	26/22/c
Dublin	54/45/sh	52/39/sh
Geneva	29/26/pc	40/38/r
Moscow	17/8/pc	17/11/sf
Rome	44/33/pc	48/40/s
Sydney	84/60/s	79/64/c
Tokyo	49/36/pc	43/32/s

s-sunny, pc-partly cloudy, c-cloudy, sh-showers, t-thunderstorms, r-rain, sf-snow flurries, sn-snow, i-ice.

Look out

People

LITIGATION

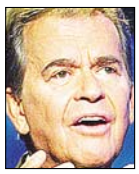
He Means 'Mentally Ill Crack Addict' in a Nice Way

WESLEY SNIPES sued New York City Monday, charging that it had no jurisdiction to seek his DNA in a paternity suit filed in Indiana. The federal suit seeks to nullify a March arrest warrant filed against Snipes by a New York family court judge, who also is named in the suit, and to prevent Indiana prosecutors from continuing to seek the actor's DNA. Snipes said in his suit that he never met the woman and claimed she was a "mentally ill former crack addict" who had made wild claims in the past involving celebrities such as Prince and former President Clinton. (AP)

AILING

Host Plans to Rock In New Year from Bed

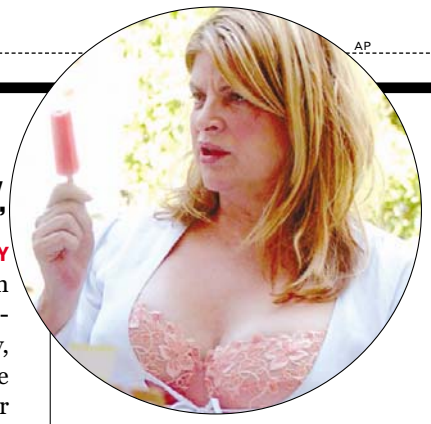
DICK CLARK will spend Christmas, and perhaps New Year's Eve, in the Burbank, Calif., hospital where he's recovering from a mild stroke, his spokesman said Tuesday. Clark, who suffered the stroke Dec. 6, is out of intensive care but will remain hospitalized through Christmas. He will be watching his annual New Year's Eve television special either from the hospital or his home in Malibu. "His brain is 100 percent there," Shefrin said. (AP)



ENDORSEMENTS

Next Season: Kirstie Alley In 'Slightly Husky Actress'

"Fat Actress" star **KIRSTIE ALLEY** has signed a deal to appear in ads for the Jenny Craig weight-management program. Alley, who has said she wants to lose the weight that prompted her upcoming Showtime series, will star in Jenny Craig Inc.'s 2005 advertising campaign. The commercials will begin airing Jan. 10, the company announced Monday, and will track her progress as she attempts to lose more than 50 pounds. "I had a great time getting fat and now I'm going to have an even greater time losing weight," Alley, 53, said in a statement. (AP)



AP

At least two other middle-aged, B-list actresses now plan to gain weight.

SIMPSONS

Ashlee's Backing Tracks Demand Own Bus, Roadies

ASHLEE SIMPSON, whose appearance on NBC's "Saturday Night Live" went awry in a does-she-or-doesn't-she lip-synch moment, will go on the road next year in her first headlining tour. The tour, scheduled to start Feb. 18 in Los Angeles, will include shows in Seattle, Denver, Chicago, New York, Atlanta and Dallas, Geffen Records announced. Simpson will also host the West Coast portion of ABC's "New Year's Rockin' Eve 2005" and perform at the Orange Bowl in Miami on Jan. 4. (AP)

ALBERT FERREIRA/REUTERS

Not only does Ashlee sing her own songs, she feathered her own enormous boa.

AP

TOASTY

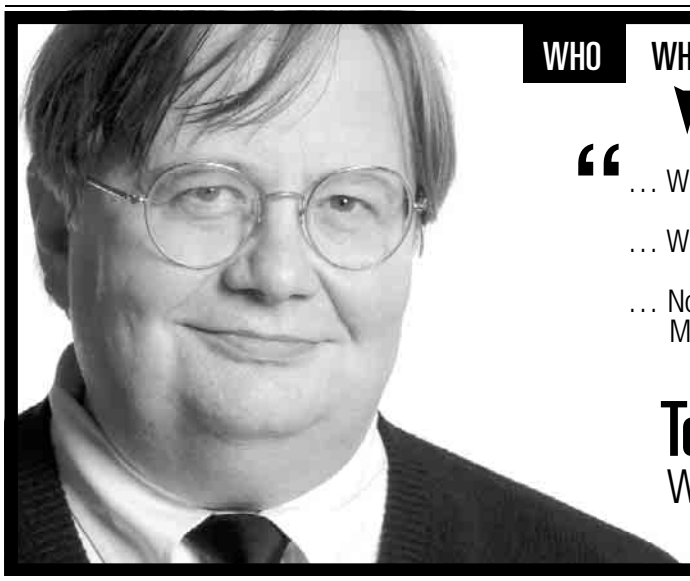
The Warm Glow Of a Celebrity

MARY J. BLIGE sang holiday songs after handing out Gap-donated coats to the Challengers Boys & Girls Club in Los Angeles on Monday. Blige stars in a Gap television ad called "Warmth," about buying warm things and hanging out with famous friends like Sarah Jessica Parker. (EXPRESS)

LOOSE CHANGE

Does This Make Him Better Than Us, or Just Richer?

TOM CRUISE stuffed $5,000 into a donation jar at a Lexington, Va., Dairy Queen on Wednesday, the Roanoke Times & World News reported Friday. The jar was for 11-year-old Ashley Flint, who nearly died in a go-cart accident in September. Cruise was in town to film segments of "War of the Worlds." Flint's mother, Regina Cornwell, told the Times: "I appreciate Tom Cruise. ... But I appreciate anyone who put $1 in those jars." Since her accident, Flint has had three surgeries to repair her torn carotid artery and needs another operation in January, the paper reported. (AP)



WHO | WHAT | WHERE | WHEN | WHY

"... What's the difference between this show and the 24-hour flu? Twenty-three hours ...

... Where oh where is a cable outage when you really need one ...

... No, it doesn't make much sense, but maybe I wasn't paying close enough attention. Maybe I was distracted by a piece of pocket lint ..."

Tom Shales | TV Critic

Writing to spare you the agony.

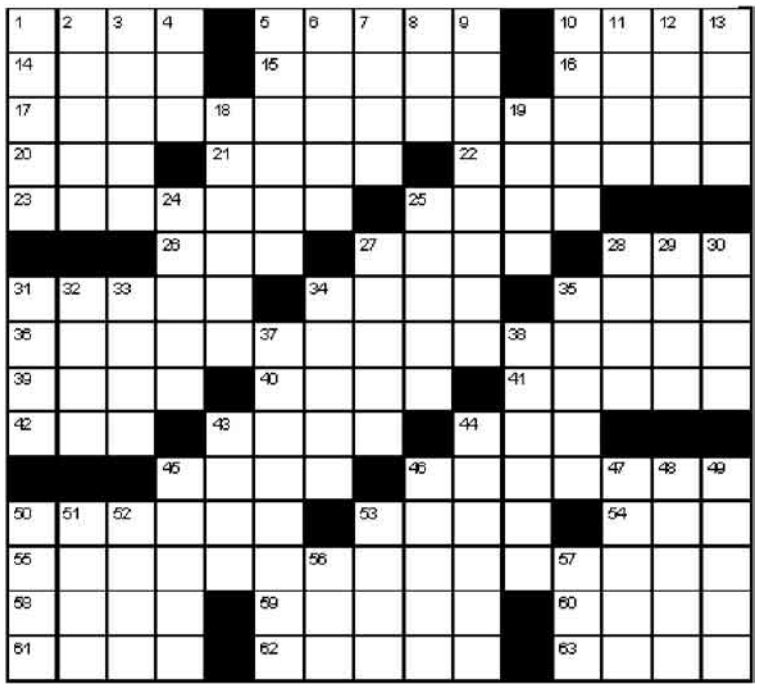
The Washington Post

N02-181/5x3

1944

On Dec. 22, during the World War II Battle of the Bulge, U.S. Brig. Gen. Anthony C. McAuliffe reportedly replied "Nuts!" when the Germans demanded that the Americans surrender.

Fringe Benefits | *Edited by Timothy E. Parker*



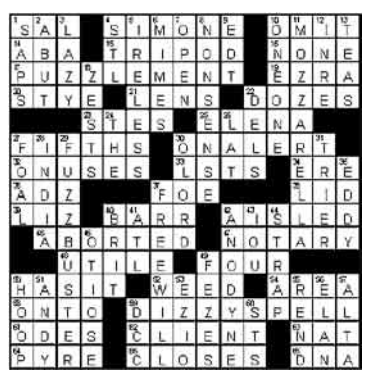
ACROSS

1 Cherrystone, e.g.
5 Harvests
10 "Amazin'" team
14 Angelic circle
15 Hawke in "Dead Poets Society"
16 Shaving cream ingredient, perhaps
17 Pot of gold site?
20 Incredible feat involving a hole
21 Weaver's frame
22 Kicks the bucket
23 Frights
25 Related
26 "... but is it ___?"
27 Picked-up items
28 Hydrotherapy facility
31 Companion of Kukla
34 Mystique
35 Whirled
36 Great serve?
39 Skillfully
40 Appearance
41 Borscht server
42 Court call that sounds permissive
43 It may be rounded up
44 Hammarskjold of the United Nations
45 Hay measure
46 Covered a wall, in a way
50 It may be underfoot
53 Cargo measures
54 Long or now antecedent
55 Arctic tern's nesting area?
58 Pizzazz
59 On the verge of snapping
60 On a slow boat to China, e.g.
61 Apportion
62 Inviting sign
63 "Bill & ___ Excellent Adventure" (1989)

DOWN

1 Eat cake on your diet
2 One of a knight's arms
3 Tree used in cabinet work
4 Land ruled by King Guzzle
5 Witty reply
6 Cultural values
7 "Can I get a word in?"
8 Eagle + 2
9 Cinema feature
10 Massenet opera
11 Tyrrhenian Sea isle
12 Accepted without complaining
13 Puts in stitches
18 Broccoli bud
19 Pupil environs
24 Not fair?
25 Brother of Moses
27 Made a grand grander
28 Tater
29 Brook sound
30 Heche in "Psycho"
31 Picasso's birthstone
32 Place for an earbob
33 Pleasant tune
34 Blazing
35 Thespian's milieu
37 Folded dish
38 Tick away
43 Bisection
44 One of Santa's team
45 American frontiersman
46 Grace under pressure
47 American poet Lizette
48 Went wrong
49 "The Ballet Class" painter
50 News flash
51 Longest river
52 Brief quarrel
53 Big top
56 Female lobster
57 Club in Yankee Stadium

Yesterday's Solution



Horoscope

By Stella Wilder

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) This is a good day to let bygones be bygones — or you may find that a potential difference of opinion grows into a long-term conflict.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) You are in for a few surprises, no matter where you look. Even external influences may seem to work against you but only for a while.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) Make up your mind to work with natural and unnatural forces that you cannot control. Be flexible, move forward and adapt to change.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) You'll have to change your plans, but you can still remain true to primary intentions. Don't get swept up in an emotional whirlwind.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) You're likely to witness much that opens your eyes to new possibilities. Now is no time to turn your back on developments.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) Despite the encouragement you receive from others, you're going to have to work hard to circumvent obstacles looming in your path.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) Don't worry if you have to repeat yourself; it means more and more people want to hear what you have to say. And indeed, you have much on your mind.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) Organization may be lacking in some quarters, and it will be up to you to make the best of it. Others are depending on your innate creativity.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) You may want to recount tales of past travels and adventures or listen to those who have stories to tell.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) You may butt heads with someone who is not taking important issues as seriously as you. You can find happiness in careful compromise.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) Subtlety is not your forte. Nevertheless, try to give some thought to being courteous and timely.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) You may have to work harder than usual to concentrate on your primary goal. Distractions abound, no matter how focused you are.

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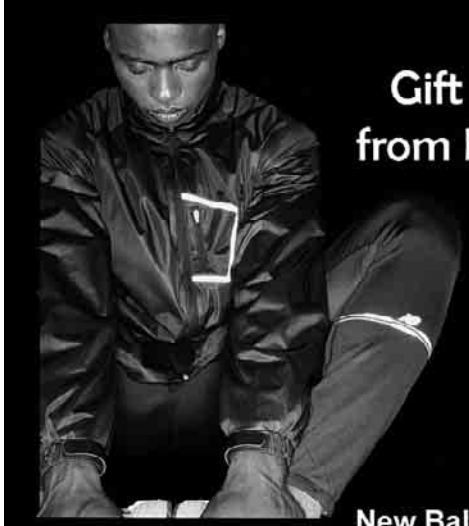

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